

Article

Personal Trajectories and National History: Why the Goryeo People Went to the Mongol Empire and How They Lived There

LEE Myungmi



The Review of Korean Studies Volume 27 Number 2 (December 2024): 113–142

doi: 10.25024/review.2024.27.2.113

©2024 by the Academy of Korean Studies.

Introduction: Goryeo and Goryeo People in the 13th–14th centuries

The political history of the Goryeo dynasty in the 13th and 14th centuries was marked by external threats and internal struggles. Under the power structure in which the Mongol emperor was at the apex and political power was granted through a relationship with him, disputes over the Goryeo throne were frequent, Goryeo's political power was dualized or diversified, and political forces were divided (Lee 2016). Modern historical evaluations from the perspective of national history tend to take a negative view of the extension of state politics beyond the boundaries of the state in this period. From this research perspective, current Korean history scholarship refers to this period as the “Yuan Interference Period” 元干涉期 to emphasize that the Goryeo “state” was maintained despite the political influence of the Mongol power.¹

From a different point of view, however, it is also true that the relationship with the Mongol Empire² during this period provided the Goryeo people, including the Goryeo kings, with novel environments and opportunities. It was in the process of each individual's adaptation to these environments and utilization of these opportunities that Goryeo's national history was written.

When the relationship between Goryeo and the Mongol Empire was stable, the movement of people between the two countries was greater and more diverse than in any other period in the pre-modern era. Mongol princesses married Goryeo kings and came to Goryeo; Goryeo kings stayed at the Mongol

court as members of the *kesbig*, or royal guard, before assuming the throne. Even after assuming the throne, they often made long visits to the Mongol court to meet with the emperor and resolve pending issues. There were also many Goryeo bureaucrats who accompanied the princes and kings, and many Mongol bureaucrats traveled back and forth between Goryeo and the Mongol Empire on diplomatic business. Common people as well as the ruling class crossed the border for a variety of reasons, and many settled in the Mongol Empire.

The explosion of research on the Goryeo-Mongol relations since the 2000s has seen not only a quantitative growth but also a qualitative shift. Instead of viewing the Goryeo-Mongol relationship as an extension of the traditional Chinese-centered relationship organized around the *cefeng* 册封 and the *chaogong* 朝貢, there has been a movement to view the relationship within the Mongol imperial state system, challenging the binary framing of the relationship as one of interference and resistance and the lack of attention to the impact of Goryeo's experience during this period on later politics and society (Masahiko 2013; Lee 2016; Jung 2016; Choi 2017; Lee 2024). This shift in research trends was influenced in part by new research trends and findings in the field of Mongol imperial history, which see the Mongols as a state that maintained nomadic institutions and ideas rather than a Chinese dynasty.

While the research perspective that views the Goryeo-Mongol relations in terms of interference and resistance remains powerful, this new research trend is better able to examine the structure of state-to-state relations in Goryeo and the Mongol empire and the underlying changes in Goryeo politics, diplomatic systems, and rituals, from a non-dichotomous perspective. However, this shift in perspective and the resulting scholarship have largely focused on the realm of national politics and systems. The narrative about the common people who crossed the border into the Mongol Empire during this period, both in contemporary accounts and in current research, seems to be dominated by the perspective of national history based on a narrative of Mongol's interference and Goryeo's resistance.

Historical narratives often portray members of Empress Qi's 寄 family in a negative light, as they posed a threat to the authority of the Goryeo kings and royal family through their relationship with the Mongol emperor and imperial

* This article is a revised and expanded version of a paper presented at the international conference “Transnational Korea in Eurasian Context” held at the James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies, University of Pennsylvania, May 9–11, 2024.

1 Some scholarship views the term “Yuan Interference Period” as inadequate because it inherently accepts a binary perspective of interference and resistance. For this, see Lee 2010. This author prefers the term “Mongol Subjugation Period” 服屬期 because the political power structure of Goryeo during this period was the result of the active acceptance of the relationship with the Mongol emperor at the apex and this term captures the importance of the “Mongol element” in this relationship, including interfamilial and interpersonal relationships through intermarriage and *kesbig*. For more information, see Lee 2016.

2 This article uses the terms “Mongol Empire,” “Yuan,” and “Mongol” to refer to the dynasty founded by Genghis Khan. Note that “Yuan” in this context does not mean “Yuan dynasty” 元朝, but rather “Da-Yuan” 大元, a Chinese name for the Mongolian term, Yekhe Mongol Ulus. It was officially adopted by Qubilai and used in the region of Asia where Chinese script was used. For more information on the dynastic name of the Mongol Empire, see Kim 2006.

family. For the women commonly referred to as *gongnyeo* 貢女,³ who were the origin of the Qi family's power, typical portrayals emphasized that they were “dragged” to the Mongol Empire and endured a miserable life, spreading the Goryeo style of clothing and culture, known as Goryeoyang 高麗樣 at the cost of personal suffering. Both narratives focus exclusively on the perspective of national history, which effectively ignores the actions and consequences of women in this environment; the narrative involves women but is not written from a woman's point of view. Furthermore, these perspectives and narratives make it difficult to recognize that *gongnyeo*, who symbolize the damage done to the Goryeo state by Mongolian coercion, and Empress Qi, who symbolizes the damage done to the Goryeo state by those who personally capitalized on the state's crisis, in fact, shared similar life trajectories.

The movement of Goryeo people to the Mongol Empire during this period was greatly influenced by the national political context of the Goryeo-Mongol relations, and their lives in the Mongol Empire in turn influenced Goryeo in many ways. Many of the major events in Goryeo during this period were the results of adaptation and utilization of the environment by Goryeo kings, royal families, bureaucrats, and common people who willingly or otherwise encountered the Mongol Empire. Of course, the meaning and weight of such events in their lives would have differed from person to person. In many cases, the history of a nation is not so much the result of the planning and intentions of a particular actor (usually a king or other political powers) as it is the result of the accidental convergence of the different life trajectories of many individuals. This is especially true in circumstances where national affairs are beyond the control of the nation's leaders.

There is a general tendency to evaluate negatively or underestimate the impact of individual life orientations that deviate from the “desirable” direction of the state. However, the Goryeo state perspective does not provide a complete picture of Goryeo people's lives, nor is it sufficient to fully illuminate the international situation and environment that shaped them. The Goryeo-Mongol relations not only shaped the lives of Goryeo people of the time but

was also crucial to the unfolding of Korean history.⁴

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it aims to examine the various circumstances that led many Goryeo people to the Mongol Empire during this period and their subsequent lives from their perspective. A substantial body of case studies exists on the Goryeo people who went to the Mongol Empire during this period. This study synthesizes these case studies, while also attempting to portray the lives and circumstances of these individuals beyond the tendency to frame their lives in terms of national history.

Second, it aims to examine how the different life trajectories of individual Goryeo people who crossed the border within the structure of political relations between Goryeo and the Mongol Empire influenced the politics and society of Goryeo at that time and the social changes that followed. This research effort is in line with the recent trend of research that seeks to examine interstate relations, politics, and institutions in Goryeo and the Mongol Empire from a “non-binary” perspective.

To this end, the next chapter will provide an overview of the context in which the Goryeo people went to the Mongol Empire during this period, and the third chapter will examine how the goals or interests of the Goryeo people who went to the Mongol Empire were related to key events in Goryeo politics and society. Finally, I will conclude with a look at some of the ways in which Goryeo people lived in the Mongol Empire and interacted with each other, based on the common denominator of “Goryeo.”

Why did Goryeo People Go to the Mongol Empire in the 13th and 14th centuries?

There were a variety of reasons and circumstances that brought Goryeo people to the Mongol Empire during this period, but the most significant factors were war, politics, and economic and cultural needs.

3 *Gong* 貢 means “tribute.” To refer to the Goryeo women sent to the Mongol Empire, historical records from the Goryeo dynasty use terms such as *dongnyeo* 童女 and *minyeo* 美女; they do not use the term *gong-nyeo*.

4 In a recent essay on the Goryeo-Mongol relations, David M. Robinson (2023, 694–99) provides an overview of the Goryeo people who crossed into the Mongol Empire, suggesting that their effect on Mongol imperial history allows us to move beyond the framing of Mongol “interference” and “domination” of Goryeo. This paper complements Robinson's research by examining the Goryeo people's actions on the unfolding of Goryeo history.

Movements during Wartime

First, there were those who were captured or surrendered during the nearly 30 years of war between Goryeo and the Mongols. After the first Mongol Invasion in 1231, Goryeo moved its capital to Ganghwado 江華島 to counter the Mongols, and the two sides fought intermittently until 1259, when the crown prince of Goryeo met with Qubilai (who later ascended to the throne) to end the war.⁵

The number of prisoners of war was likely very large, but it is not well documented. Among the prisoners of war, the case of Gang Suhyeong 康守衡, who played a significant role in the early Goryeo-Mongol relations, is a representative example of turning the national crisis of war into a personal opportunity. He became a prisoner of war as a child and later served as an official in the Mongol court, where he helped shape the Mongol-Goryeo relations. Goryeo also gave him a government post in consideration of his relationship with the Mongols, and when he died in 1289, the post had been afforded Chanseongsa 贊成事, the rank of prime minister second class.⁶

There are more documented cases of groups who surrendered to the Mongols and settled in the Mongol Empire with the human and material base from Goryeo. A representative example is the case of Hong Bokwon 洪福源, who, as a commander of a fighting force in the region of Inju 麟州—now in North Pyeongan Province—during the first Mongol Invasion in 1231, led the people under his command to surrender to the Mongols. He was given the position of Gwanryeong gwibu Goryeo gungmin janggwan 管領歸附高麗軍民長官 in Mongolia, a minister in charge of managing the Goryeo military and civilian population that had come under Mongol control, and he was also responsible for recruiting those who had not yet come under Mongol control. His son Hong Cha-gu 洪茶丘, grandson Hong Jung-hui 洪重喜, and others later took over the position and worked in the Liaodong region.⁷

5 This meeting is described in Goryeo sources such as *Goryeo History* 高麗史 as a deliberate choice by the Goryeo crown prince and his entourage, but it is also seen as a thing of a coincidence. For more information, see H. Kim 2007.

6 See *Goryeo History* 25 (King Wonjong 1, February 27, the *eulchuk* 乙丑 day); *Goryeo History* 30 (King Chungryeol 15, January 20, the *gyeongja* 庚子 day).

7 See *Goryeo History* 130 (Biography of Hong Bok-won); *Yuan History* 154 (Biography of Hong Bok-

A similar example is the case of Jo Hwi 趙暉 and Tak Cheong 卓青. They surrendered to the Mongols at the end of the war and brought the area north of Cheollyeong 鐵嶺 under Mongol control. The Mongols established Ssangseong chongggwanbu 雙城總管府 in the region and appointed Jo and Tak as *chongggwan* 總管 and *cheonho* 千戶, respectively. Their descendants inherited the position until Goryeo took back control of the area during the reign of King Gongmin.⁸

Following their surrender, they came to be regarded as a “bu-Yuan 附元 force” who pursued their private interests in relations with the Mongol Empire against the interests of the Goryeo dynasty. This phenomenon was particularly noticeable among members of the Hong family, who were based in the Liaodong region. There were several factors that brought them into conflict with the Goryeo kings or royal family, but the primary issue was a conflict of interest regarding administrative authority over the Goryeo people living in the Liaodong area.⁹ This demonstrates that although the historical sources do not reveal their names, a considerable number of Goryeo people who flowed into Mongolia throughout the war lived in groups with other Goryeo people, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Their presence was a major factor in the jurisdictional issues over the Liaodong region that later arose in Goryeo’s relations with the Mongol Empire (Chu 1974; Chang 1999; Lee 2001; Oh 2017).

In addition, there are cases of people who surrendered or were captured during the war and settled in the Mongol Empire but had little contact with Goryeo afterward. This is the case of Yi Baek-wu 李伯祐, who seemed to have surrendered or been captured during the Battle of Gangdong Castle 江東城 in 1218. He was settled in the Mongol Empire based on his relationship with the Shi 史 family, one of the representative Chinese families of the early Mongol Empire.¹⁰

won).

8 See *Goryeo History* 130 (Biography of Jo Hwi).

9 For primary sources on the Hong family, see *Goryeo History* 130 (Biography of Hong Bok-won); *Yuan History* 154 (Biography of Hong Bok-won). Related works include Chu 1974; Chang 1999; Lee 2001; Oh 2017, etc.

10 For primary sources on Yi Baek-woo, see, for example, *Mokamjip* 牧庵集, Vol. 19, “Siwickingun dojihwisa I-gong sindobi” 侍衛親軍都指揮使李公神道碑. For related research, see Chang 1990; Lee 2012, etc.

Post-War Political Relations between Goryeo and the Mongol Empire

Some Goryeo people went to the Mongol Empire in service of the political relationship between the two countries after the relations stabilized. These mainly included Goryeo women, known as *gongnyeo*, eunuchs, and officials who accompanied Goryeo kings or princes.

It is well known that many Goryeo women were sent to the Mongol Empire. During the Mongol wars with the Southern Song in the mid-1270s, many women were recruited as military wives. In later years, women from the ruling class were mainly sent to serve the Mongol imperial family or ruling class. The pattern of these flows varied over time, and until the reign of King Chungryeol, young women were often selected by the Mongol princess Kutluk Kelmish—the Goryeo queen—to take as gifts when she went to Yuan, or by the Goryeo king to bolster his position during times of political strife. From the time of King Chungseon's ascension to the throne in Goryeo and Emperor Wuzong 武宗 Kaishan's crowning in Yuan, a new pattern emerged of sending envoys from Yuan to select and take Goryeo women. In addition, intermarriage between the Mongol and Goryeo ruling families, which resulted in Goryeo women going to Yuan, was common over the span of Goryeo-Mongol relations (Lee 2023).

Similar to *gongnyeo*, there were eunuchs who were sent to the Mongol Empire at the request of the Mongols. Some of them became eunuchs themselves to go to the Mongol court, and it seems that the difference in the status of eunuchs in the Goryeo court and the Mongol court served as an important motivation for their decision. In Goryeo, eunuchs had low status and could only hold very low government positions, while in the Mongol court, eunuchs could hold quite high government positions (Yi 2013, Ch. 4).

Another influential factor was the practice of many Goryeo kings to reside in the Mongol Empire before or after their ascension. This practice constituted one of the major changes that occurred in the Goryeo-Mongol relations and is related to the Mongol system called *keshig*. Members of the *keshig*, the personal guard of the Mongol imperial family, took turns escorting their masters and participating in important political decisions. Consisting of the sons or younger brothers of the heads of Mongol ruling families, the members of the *keshig* were trusted by the emperor and played an important role in the Mongol politics. From the Mongols' perspective, the inclusion of the sons of subjugated peoples'

ruling families in the *keshig* was partly intended to gather hostages and partly to educate and integrate them into the ruling class of the empire (Masahiko 2001).

Goryeo kings also attended the *keshig* before their enthronement and built their political base by establishing personal ties with the Mongol ruling class. Moreover, even after ascending the throne, Goryeo kings often visited the Yuan court for various matters, spending most of their reigns there like King Chungseon, or being summoned and detained for long periods of time over political disputes like King Chunguk.¹¹

As such, there were many occasions when Goryeo kings stayed in the Mongol Empire before or after their enthronement, and accompanying the Goryeo prince or king became one of the primary reasons for Goryeo officials to visit the Mongol Empire during this period. Those who served the Goryeo princes who participated in *keshig* were also involved in *keshig*, and the fact that *keshig* activity was the basis for political activity in Goryeo exerted a similar influence on them. The position of *keshig* was hereditary, so even if one returned to Goryeo, one of his sons would inherit the position and remain in the Mongol Empire.

Cultural and Economic Needs

Finally, some went to the Mongol Empire to achieve their personal or collective goals after the Goryeo-Mongol relations stabilized. This category mainly includes Confucian students, Buddhist monks, and merchants.

It was not until 1315 that Yuan implemented the *keju* 科舉—the civil service examinations to select officials. The Yuan *keju*, *zhike* 制科 consisted of three rounds, *xiangshi* 鄉試, *huishi* 會試, and *zhanshi* 展試: a total of 300 candidates were selected from the first round, the provincial examination *xiangshi*; 100 candidates were selected from the second round, *huishi*, held in the capital of Dadu 大都; and the ranking of these 100 candidates was determined in the *zhanshi*, the third round. In this system, Goryeo, as Zhendong xingsheng

11 See *Goryeo History* 33 (King Chungseon Restored Year [1309], November 17, *imsin* 壬申 day); *Goryeo History* 35 (King Chunguk 8, January 25, the *gihae* 己亥 day; April 24, the *jungnyo* 丁卯 day; King Chunguk 12, May 13, *sinju* 辛酉 day). For a discussion of the political context in which King Chungseon traveled to Yuan three months after regaining the throne and remained politically active in Yuan for the rest of his reign, and King Chunguk was detained in Yuan for four years in conflict with supporters of King Sim 瀋王, see Lee 2016, Ch. 3.

征東行省,¹² became a *xiangshi* unit and could nominate three candidates. The 100 *huishi* candidates, selected from the 300 *xiangshi* candidates, consisted of 25 each of Mongols, *semu* 色目, Hanren 漢人, and Nanren 南人.¹³ As a Goryeo candidate, it would have been no easy task to pass the *zhike*, as the competition for Han'in and Namin would have been fierce due to the number of candidates.

Many Goryeo Confucian scholars and students took the Yuan *zhike* and nine Goryeo people are recorded as having passed the exam, with Yi Gok 李穀 and Yi Saek 李穡 earning fame for their exceptional performance.¹⁴

After passing the Yuan *zhike* in 1335 and working as an official at the Yuan court, Yi Gok sent a poem to his son Yi Saek, encouraging him to study and saying, "The boy should have an official post in the emperor's capital."¹⁵ This shows that many Goryeo Confucian scholars and students took the Yuan *zhike* out of an ambition to serve as officials in the emperor's court and a desire to have their abilities validated and recognized. The case of Park Jung-gang, who didn't pass the examination but left for Dadu and said, "If a man is frustratedly stuck in a corner, what's the difference between him and a frog in a well?"¹⁶ shows that the desire to experience the larger world played a role in Goryeo Confucian students' decision to leave for Dadu.

Goryeo monks also crossed the border to study and seek success. The journey of monks to China in search of the Buddha's teachings, or Dharma, preceded the relationship with the Mongols and continued, albeit in a different form, during the Mongol Empire (B. Kim 2007).

Among the cases of Goryeo monks traveling to the Mongol Empire specific to the Goryeo-Mongol context were the monks who responded to the emperor's call. This included the monks who transcribed Buddhist scriptures.¹⁷ They usually returned home after completing their transcriptions, but they

stayed in Dadu for a year or more and could develop connections there.

There were also cases of the Mongols inviting a high priest from Goryeo to stay with them. This is the case of Won'gong Haewon 圓公海圓, who was the first head of Sungeun Bokwonsa 崇恩福元寺 and served as head for 29 years. The temple was built near the capital by order of the emperor, enshrined the portrait of the Mongol imperial family, and was directly under the authority of the emperor. Haewon had already gone to Yuan in 1305 and stayed in the territory of Ananda, king of Anseo 安西王 in response to the emperor Chengzong 成宗 Temur, who invited Haewon at Ananda's request. Haewon then came to Dadu to serve the emperor during the reign of Wuzong Kaishan, stayed through the completion of the temple during the reign of Renzong Ayurvarwada, and was appointed as the first head of the temple.¹⁸

In addition, Goryeo monks went to Yuan for personal reasons or in the interests of their temples, either through contacts with the Yuan imperial family or through private routes. These cases are discussed below.

Finally, there were some Goryeo merchants who chose to travel to the Mongol Empire for business. The protagonist of *Laoqida* (*Old Kitai* 老乞大), a Chinese language 漢語 textbook created in the late Goryeo dynasty and used in the Joseon dynasty, is a Goryeo merchant who travels from Gaegyeong, the capital of Goryeo, to Dadu. His conversations with a Chinese merchant he meets along the way make up most of the book's content and give a good idea of the annual routes and profits of Goryeo merchants of that time.

The fact that beginners' Chinese textbooks were organized with information for merchants shows that merchants comprised a large part of the audience for beginner Chinese at that time. The intermediate Chinese textbook *Potongshi* 朴通事, which is a companion to *Laoqida*, consists of information necessary for a long stay in Dadu. These books are language textbooks, so the information in them is not necessarily historical fact, but they offer a valuable view of that time. It was often the desire for greater profits that drove Goryeo merchants to undertake long, arduous journeys that often resulted in scams and homelessness, just like the merchant in *Laoqida*.¹⁹ In the trading environment of

12 In 1280, the Mongol Empire established a government office in Goryeo for the 2nd Japanese campaign. After the end of the Japanese campaign, this office was maintained and Goryeo kings simultaneously served as the minister. For more information, see Koh 1961, 1962; Hideto 1964; Chang 1994; Masahiko 2011a.

13 See *Yuan History* 81 (*zhi* 志 31, Selection 1).

14 See *Goryeo History* 74 (*zhi* 志 28, Selection 2, "Zhike" 制科). For more information on Yi Gok and Yi Saek, see Lee I. 2013; Do 2021.

15 Yi Gok, *Gajeongjip* 稼亭集, Vol. 18, "Yong gahyeong siun gisi aja nulhwoe" 用家兄詩韻寄示兒子訥懷.

16 Yi Gok, *Mocheon mungo* 牧隱文集, Vol. 20, "Biography of Mr. Park 朴氏傳."

17 *Goryeo History* 30 (King Chungryeol 16, April 25, the *jeongyu* 丁酉 day; August 3, the *gyeyu* 癸酉 day); *Goryeo History* 32 (King Chungryeol 31, December 18, the *gyeongin* 庚寅 day), etc.

18 Yi Gok, *Dongmunseon* 東文選 (compiled by Seo Geojeung 徐居正 et al.), Vol. 118, "Dae Sungeun Bokwonsa Goryeo jeil daesa Wongong bi" 大崇恩福元寺高麗第一代師圓公碑.

19 The story of the *Laoqida* merchant suggests that Goryeo merchants traveling back and forth between Dadu and Gaegyeong may have made approximately 100% profit. For more information, see Wee

the Mongol Empire, the desire for greater profitability was a potent motivation for Goryeo merchants.

Living in the Mongol Empire: Impact on the Goryeo Dynasty

The Goryeo migration to the Mongol Empire in the 13th and 14th centuries was a mixture of voluntary and involuntary movements. For example, the women who went to Yuan during this period are called “gongnyeo” in the current study, emphasizing the involuntary nature of their movement responding to the unreasonable demands of the Mongols, but there were many instances where their going to the Mongol Empire was driven by the will of the Goryeo government or their families, if not by the women’s own. As for the eunuchs, while some were sent at the request of Yuan, others became eunuchs voluntarily because of the better treatment they received at the Yuan court. The case of the monks, whose movement was voluntary in general, also includes examples of responding to the emperor’s call. The sons of Goryeo government officials were initially reluctant to join the *kesbig* with the Goryeo royal family but gradually became more inclined to do so because of the political benefits it offered (Masahiko 2001).²⁰

Even if there were involuntary drivers of movement to the Mongol Empire, there can be no blanket assertion that the lives of Goryeo people in the empire were necessarily full of suffering. Similarly, voluntary relocation to the Mongol Empire did not mean that life there was without struggle. Life in the Mongol Empire may have been hard for the Goryeo people in some ways, but it was not without benefits, the promise of which may have been their goal in crossing the border.

The presence of Goryeo people who settled in the Mongol Empire would have a great impact on the Goryeo dynasty and Korean history. Examples include the so-called “Anti-Yuan Reform” under King Gongmin and the spread of Neo-Confucianism, which played a major role in the political and social changes of the late Goryeo and early Joseon dynasties. It is somewhat superficial to view these issues solely in terms of the political relationship between the

Goryeo dynasty and the Mongol Empire; that is, in terms of state-level interests. We must look at the intertwined interests and orientations of the Goryeo people, who went to the Mongol Empire from different backgrounds and circumstances.

Goryeo Women in the Mongol Empire: Empress Qi, Goryeoyang, and Goryeo Politics

The roles of Goryeo women who were sent to the Mongol Empire for various reasons during this period seem to fall into two main categories. One was as court ladies, and the other was as spouses of officials. The lives of Goryeo women who married Mongol officials would have varied, but the few known cases suggest that they lived relatively stable lives. Examples include the case of Kim Jang-hui 金長姬, who appears to have been taken captive during the war, and the aunt of Goryeo official Yeom Jesin 廉悌臣 (Lee 2022). However, compared to marriage and subsequent life in Goryeo, where it was customary to live in a wife’s home after marriage and where monogamy was the norm, life in Mongolia, where long distances made it difficult to travel back and forth to one’s family and where polygamy was common, would have been more difficult for Goryeo women.²¹ It is clear that their lives must have been challenging in that they had to endure cultural differences and distance from their families, but it seems unlikely that their lives were as difficult or as miserable as the current narrative portrays.

Regardless of the circumstances that led them to the Mongol Empire, the moment they crossed the border, their goals or direction in life might have shifted: aiming, in a marriage, for a comfortable life, or in the case of a courtier, for the emperor’s favor and elevation in status. Although it could not have been foreseen when King Chungryeol or later Goryeo kings sent women to win the support of the Mongol emperor and the ruling class in political disputes, the situation after the Goryeo women achieved their goals was already somewhat predetermined. This situation was rather against the Goryeo kings, and we can see it in the case of Empress Qi.

1997; Lee K. 2013.

20 For example, see *Goryeo History* 124 (Biography of Yun Seok).

21 The case of Ms. Goryeo, the second wife of the Yuan official Kukudai, illustrates this point. Her story is told in the *Nancun chuogenglu* 南村輟耕錄 by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 under the title “Goryeossi sujeol” 高麗氏守節. See Lee 2022.

Perhaps the most successful of the Goryeo women who went to the Mongol Empire was Empress Qi. As a court lady, she was favored by the Shundi Togon Temur, gave birth to Prince Ayursiridhara in 1339 or 1340, and was crowned the second empress in 1340.²² The birth of the prince created the opportunity for Qi's own elevation from court lady to empress, and it would also affect Togon Temur's regime and the political situation in Goryeo.

First, the birth of a crown prince by Court Lady Qi and her appointment as empress provided the background for Togon Temur to lay the foundations of imperial power. Togon Temur, who ascended to the throne in 1333 under the influence of the vizier El Temur, made Tanashiri, El Temur's daughter, empress and appointed El Tucus, son of Wenzong Tok Temur and nephew of Togon Temur, as his successor. El Temur died shortly after Togon Temur's enthronement, but his son, the remaining members of his power, and the new vizier Bayan seized power. The year 1340 saw a series of political upheavals: Bayan's nephew Tokto sided with Togon Temur, overthrew Bayan, deposed Empress Budasiri of Wenzong Tok Temur, and sent her son and designated successor, El Tucus, into exile. This was the result of the power politics of the late Yuan period, and it was also related to the fact that Court Lady Qi had given birth to the emperor's son, which led to increased scrutiny from Empress Budasiri and Bayan, forcing Togon Temur to respond (Yoon 2016; Kwon 2019).

Empress Qi's elevation seems to have brought about a change in the composition of the court staff. With a Goryeo woman becoming empress, it was natural that the proportion of Goryeo women among the court maids would increase. There is also a perception that the proportion of Goryeo-born eunuchs in the Yuan court increased after Qi's ascension.²³ Empress Qi's elevation also affected the situation outside the court. There were many women in Dadu who claimed to be Empress Qi's relatives, demonstrating that Empress Qi's example provided a kind of Mongolian dream for Goryeo women in Dadu.

It is difficult to say whether the Goryeo women who went to the Mongol Empire during this period did so of their own volition. Sometimes they were relocated at the request of the Mongol court, sometimes for the political

interests of the Goryeo king, and sometimes for the interests of their families, and this process was likely a difficult choice for the women and their families.²⁴ Their journey to Yuan would have been accompanied by sadness and pain. But at the same time, once the decision was made, they may have set a goal for themselves to be favored by the emperor, to give birth to a prince, and to enjoy the wealth of the gods.²⁵ It was Empress Qi who achieved this goal.

It was in this atmosphere that the Goryeo style clothing, Goryeoyang, became fashionable in the Yuan court and capital.²⁶ The case of a Goryeo woman who was neither a Mongolian noblewoman nor Goryeo royalty becoming an empress seems to have been regarded with ambivalence among the people of Dadu. While the trend of Goryeoyang was based on the emotional impact of the dramatic success story of an ordinary woman, envy of her, some cynical views of the trend of Goryeoyang and Goryeo women in Dadu seem to reveal negative perceptions of Empress Qi.²⁷

The actions of the Goryeo woman who achieved the goal of her involuntary journey to the Mongol Empire also affected the politics of Goryeo. In the power structure of the Mongol subjugation period, where power was granted according to one's relationship with the Mongol imperial power, all Goryeo kings after King Chungryeol tried to build the foundation of their kingship through marriage to the imperial family or participation in the imperial *keshig*. By their very nature, these relationships and the power that came with them could not be monopolized by the Goryeo king, and they competed with other members of the royal family for these relationships and the power that came with them. The fact that they were in a competitive structure shows the state of the kingship at that time. For the most part, the Goryeo kings prevailed over their rivals; however, by the time of King Gongmin, the Qi family had emerged as competition to the Goryeo king and royal family in terms of

22 See *Goryeo History* 36 (King Chunghye 1, April 11, the *gyesa* 癸巳 day); *Yuan History* 114 (Biography of Uljeiqutu Khatun of Shundi Togon Temur).

23 See Quan Heng 權衡, *Gengshen waishi* 庚申外史, *zhizheng* 至正 2 (1342).

24 The sadness and pain of separation is evident in accounts of the process of selecting young women to be sent to Yuan. See, for example, Yi Gok, *Gajeongjip*, Vol. 8, "Dae eon'gwan cheong pachwi dongnyeo seo" 代言官請罷取童女書.

25 When the first group of Goryeo women were selected and sent to the Mongol court during the reign of King Chungryeol, Kim Chan 金贊 wrote a poem expressing the pain and sadness of the separation and also expressing his hope for their accomplishments at the Mongol court. For more information, see Kim Chan, *Dongmunseon*, Vol. 18, "A Poem for *Dongnyeo*" 童女詩-次韻.

26 See Quan Heng, *Gengshen waishi*.

27 The negative perception of Goryeo women in Dadu is prominent in the poetry of the Karluk-born poet Nasen 洒賢. See Robinson 2023; Lee 2022.

relationships and power based on Mongol imperial power and authority (Lee 2016).

Empress Qi, whose own family foundation was tenuous, was uneasy about the birth of the first empress's son. While consolidating her son Ayursiridharas' position as crown prince, she also tried to promote his ascension to the throne.²⁸ This prompted King Gongmin, who had been assisted in his enthronement by Empress Qi and burdened by the influence of the Qi family members in Goryeo, to attempt to rebuild the kingship in a new way (Lee 2016, Ch. 4). Eventually, King Gongmin attempted to reshape relations with the Mongol Empire and reestablish his kingship by initiating the "Anti-Yuan Reforms" of 1356, which began with the assassination of key members of the Qi family. Empress Qi, whose family was killed, attempted to have King Gongmin overthrown in 1262 to avenge her family and stabilize her son's position (Lee 2016, Ch. 4).

The emergence of Empress Qi and its outcomes were not merely the result of the "problematic" nature of the individual and those around her. The events of King Gongmin's early reign were more or less preordained when Goryeo sent women to the Mongol Empire for various reasons and when King Chungryeol, as a prince, attempted to marry a Mongol princess in order to reinstate his father, King Wonjong. This was because the power structure of the time depended on relationships with the imperial power, and the Goryeo king and royal family had already built their power base on such a relationship. As Empress Qi's example shows, the goals achieved by the Goryeo women who went to the Mongol Empire could be the most powerful of those "relationships."

Eunuch and Goryeo Politics

Eunuchs were castrated men who worked in the inner court 內廷, usually for the empress or the empress dowager. As such, their political influence was exercised primarily through their relationships with the empresses and empress dowagers they served. In the process of the Khanate succession of the Mongol Empire, the will of the previous Khan, expressed through the crown prince

system, was important,²⁹ but equally important was the consent of other members of the imperial family, expressed through the *khuriltai* (Endicott-West 1986). Consequently, the political power of the dowager empresses, who directed and coordinated this process, and the political influence of the eunuchs, who assisted them, were also important.

Since Goryeo's politics centered on relations with the Mongol court, the presence of a Goryeo-born eunuch in the Yuan court was a double-edged sword, especially for the Goryeo kings. The Biography of the Eunuch in *Goryeo History* contains the stories of Goryeo-born eunuchs at the Yuan court who greatly influenced Goryeo politics.

Bang Sin-wu 方臣祐 is a typical example. He followed Princess Kutluk Kelmish to the Mongol court in 1289, where he caught the eye of Kökejin Khatun, the wife of Prince Chingim, and stayed there. He served seven emperors and two Khatuns and helped Goryeo when conflicts arose in the Goryeo-Mongol relations by representing the position of Goryeo or the king of Goryeo. With this credit, Bang Sin-wu received the title of *gongsin* 功臣, given to officials who faithfully served the dynasty or kings, and the title of *gun* 君, an aristocratic title. In addition, members of his family were given high government positions beyond their abilities.³⁰

In addition to Bang Sin-wu, there were other Goryeo eunuchs who influenced the Goryeo-related issues in their relations with the Mongol court, but rarely in a way that was beneficial to the Goryeo government. To name a few, Yi Suk 李淑 was favored by King Chungryeol to go to the Yuan court, and it is said that whenever King Chungryeol had a request for the emperor, he always went through Yi Suk. At the end of King Chungryeol's reign, during the height of the conflict between the supporters of King Chungryeol and those of King Chungseon, he helped the officials of King Chungryeol's entourage carry out a plot to overthrow King Chungseon—a series of events that destabilized

28 See *Yuan History* 44 (Emperor Shundi *zhizheng* 至正 15, March, the *gabo* 甲午 day; *zhizheng* 至正 16, January, the *gyeonsul* 庚戌 day); *Yuan History* 205 (Biography of Kama 哈麻).

29 Genghis Khan also left his will regarding the next heir, but it was not until the emperor Shizu Qubilai made his son Chingim the crown prince that this "will of the previous Khan" was institutionalized through the crown prince system. See Lee 2015.

30 See *Goryeo History* 122 (Biography of Bang Sin-wu). It should be noted that Bang Sin-wu, unlike other Goryeo-born Yuan eunuchs, had his shrine monument erected by royal decree after his death. It was common for individuals to have their grave names and shrine inscriptions commissioned based on personal relationships, and having Bang Sin-wu's shrine inscription written in the royal name honored his service to Goryeo and the Goryeo royal family during his time in the Yuan court. See Lee 2020.

Goryeo's political situation.³¹ But this may have been a natural choice for Yi Suk, considering that he was King Chungryeol's favorite.

Of note, despite Yi Suk's political behavior, King Chungseon made him the *gun* of his hometown of Pyeongchang in September 1310, just before he entered Yuan after his restoration.³² It seems that King Chungseon, who planned to make a long visit to Yuan, made this appointment in anticipation of the eunuchs' assistance at the Yuan court. There were 15 Goryeo-born Yuan eunuchs who were given the title of *gun* in their hometowns at that time. These included not only Yi Suk, who sided with King Chungryeol during the conflict, but also Im Bayantukus, whom King Chungseon personally disliked and eventually antagonized. Im Bayantukus was responsible for a series of false accusations against King Chungseon, which led to the latter's exile to Tibet.³³ King Chungseon's actions demonstrate the political power of the Goryeo eunuch who had political influence in the Yuan court.

While some, such as Im Bayantukus, used their political influence to settle personal grudges against the Goryeo king, and others, such as Bang Sin-wu, actively defended Goryeo and the royal family, it seems that the majority of Goryeo-born eunuchs in Yuan did not take a personal interest in the course of the political conflict between Goryeo and the Mongol court. This is evidenced by the fact that of the fifteen eunuchs who were appointed as *gun* during the reign of King Chungseon, most were not heavily involved in the course of the conflict.

The Goryeo-born eunuchs who joined the Yuan court, either by choice, force, or both, would have used their power in the service of Goryeo and its king when the opportunity presented itself, and they sometimes used their political power to settle personal scores. In their personal prioritization, however, the political situation in Goryeo and their responses to it were often secondary, behind the fulfillment of personal needs that may have been their reason for going to the Mongol Empire. Bang Sin-wu, who was recognized for his contributions to the Goryeo state and royal family, also used his power for personal aggrandizement and pursuit of his own interests.³⁴

31 See *Goryeo History* 122 (Biography of Yi Suk).

32 See *Goryeo History* 33 (King Chungseon 2, September 11, the *eulyu* 乙酉 day).

33 See *Goryeo History* 122 (Biography of Im Bayantukus).

34 See *Goryeo History* 122 (Biography of Bang Sin-wu).

The Goryeo-born Yuan eunuchs also aided other Goryeo people who had come to Yuan for their own reasons, as mentors and compatriots who were already fully established. However, this might have been secondary, just as the political situation in Goryeo was secondary. Since the eunuchs mainly lived at the Yuan court, the Goryeo people who benefited from their help included Goryeo women who had left their hometowns. Some of them who were fortunate enough to rise to high positions, such as empresses, would have been able to offer patronage in return. Tumender aided Court Lady Qi, for example, and later Empress Qi supported Go Yongbo 高龍普 and Park Buka 朴不花. Their influence at the Yuan court may also have been a boon to Goryeo monks who traveled to Dadu to find a patron, as in the story of Jangansa 長安寺 on Mount Geumgang (described below). It is possible that the same was true for Goryeo people who traveled to Dadu for a variety of other reasons.

Candidates for Yuan Civil Service Examination and Neo-Confucianism

The Yuan began using civil service examinations to select officials in 1315, and *Goryeo History* states that King Chungseon, who was a close confidant of Emperor Renzong Ayurbarwada, played an important role in introducing the civil service examination system in Yuan.³⁵ King Chungseon's proposal to introduce civil service examinations was prompted by the demands of Chinese scholars who had gathered at Mojuantang 萬卷堂, which King Chungseon had built at his residence in Yanjing 燕京 when he handed over the throne to King Chunguk in 1313.³⁶ King Chungseon brought in Yi Jehyeon 李齊賢, a Goryeo scholar who could hold discussions with Yuan scholars who were visiting the Mojuantang (Cho 2008; Kim 2016).³⁷ The introduction of civil service examinations in Yuan was probably the result of a combination of academic exchanges between Yi Jehyeon and Yuan scholars and the political influence of King Chungseon. In any case, the introduction of the Yuan civil service examinations paved the way for Goryeo people who wanted to make a career of learning to travel to Dadu, even in the absence of special circumstances such as Yi Jehyeon's.

35 See *Goryeo History* 34 (King Chungseon 5, March).

36 Specifically, Yao Sui 姚燧. See *Goryeo History* 34 (King Chungseon 5, March).

37 See *Goryeo History* 122 (Biography of Yi Jehyeon).

The increasing number of Goryeo students willing to take the Yuan *zhike* brought about a major change in Goryeo society: the spread of Neo-Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism played an important role in the political and social changes of late Goryeo and early Joseon. It is said that the first person to introduce Neo-Confucianism to Goryeo was An Hyang 安珦, who accompanied King Chungryeol and Princess Kutluk Kelmish to Yuan in 1289.³⁸ However, there is often a gap between introducing a new cultural tradition or discipline and it becoming widespread and impacting society. Although there may have been other factors, it seems the inclusion of Neo-Confucianist books as examination subjects³⁹ played an important role in the spread of Neo-Confucianism in Goryeo. The necessity for the many Goryeo men who wanted to pass the Yuan examinations to study the Neo-Confucianist works was one of the key drivers of the rapid spread of Neo-Confucianism in Goryeo society.

The most common motivation for Goryeo students to take the Yuan civil service examinations at that time seems to have been the desire to gain the academic and bureaucratic prestige that came with a career in Yuan service, as the cases of Yi Gok and Yi saek show (I. Lee 2013). Although the introduction and spread of Neo-Confucianism in the late Goryeo period involved other factors such as Goryeo scholars' pursuit of a new discipline that would transform Goryeo society (Do 1999), it was fundamentally the product of the candidates' desire for personal fulfillment.

Conclusion: The Goryeo Network

The 13th–14th century Goryeo is the richest in both quantity and quality of interactions at various levels beyond the state in pre-modern Korean history and also one of the periods in which the narrative of national history is very strong. While recent years have seen new approaches to this relationship itself and its influence on Goryeo politics, diplomatic systems, and rituals, the perspectives of interference, oppression, and resistance have remained dominant in Korean historical scholarship. This perspective is especially true when examining the

38 It is a later account that suggests An Hyang introduced Neo-Confucianism, and there is research that disputes this claim. For more information, see Masahiko 2006.

39 See *Yuan History* 81 (*zhi* 志 31, Selection 1).

lives of individuals who lived through this period.

The Goryeo people who crossed the border lived their lives according to their own circumstances. The Goryeo state could draw lines among these people according to their attitudes toward the state; regardless of such lines, they had their own networks as people who had to settle or live for some time in a foreign country. Here are a few examples.

In 1343, Empress Qi donated a large sum of money to Jangansa 長安寺 on Mount Geumgang to be used for the temple's restoration and to pray for blessings for her husband, Shundi Togon Temur, and her son, Crown Prince Ayursiridhara. Since Empress Qi was from Goryeo, she could have been expected to choose one of the temples in Goryeo that she knew well for this purpose. However, it was the influence of the monk Goengbyeon 宏下, who was leading the renovation of the temple, that led her to donate so much money to Jangansa.⁴⁰

Jangansa was founded in the 6th century and has been renovated several times. Goengbyeon and others pushed for the renovation of the decaying temple; initially, they received donations from within Goryeo, but the donations were not enough to rebuild the temple, and Goengbyeon traveled to Dadu in search of a patron. Eventually, through the efforts of a Goryeo-born Yuan eunuch, Go Yongbo, the patronage of the empress was granted. Go Yongbo worked for Empress Qi and was one of the most negatively perceived eunuchs of the time, along with Im Bayantukus, due to his role in the deposition and exile of King Chunghye.⁴¹

Prior to Goengbyeon's trip, there had been instances of the Yuan imperial family donating large sums of money to Goryeo temples for good luck, which may have played a role in his decision to go to Dadu of Yuan.⁴² There were

40 The actual stele has not survived, but the inscription has been preserved in the literary collections of the writer Yi Gok (Yi Gok, *Gajeongjip*, Vol. 6, "Geumgangsang Jangansa Jungheungbi" 金剛山長安寺重興碑).

41 See *Goryeo History* 109 (Biography of An Jongwon 安宗源); *Goryeo History* 111 (Biography of Song Cheonbong 宋天逢).

42 The "Munsusa Janggyungbi" 文殊寺藏經碑, erected in 1327, shows that the Yuan imperial family could be the patrons of Goryeo temples. The stele no longer exists, but its inscription was published in the *Ikjae nan'go* 益齋亂藁, the literary collections of the writer Yi Jehyun. The then empress of Taidingdi 泰定帝 sent a set of Buddhist books and 10,000 gold coins to the temple to bless the crown prince and princesses and to perform Buddhist rituals on their birthdays each year. For more information, see Jung 2012.

other instances after Goengbyeon when monks reached Dadu and used their connections there to obtain donations for their temples. After the destruction of the Jijangsa 地藏寺 on Mount Bogae in the late reign of King Gongmin, the monk Jahye 慈惠 went to Dadu to seek funds to renovate the temple. When he asked several high-ranking officials there for donations, his request reached the empress, and money from the imperial estate enabled renovations to proceed.⁴³ Based on the dates of these events, it is likely that the Yuan empress was Empress Qi, who also paid for the restoration of Jijangsa. The identity of the Yuan Dadu dignitaries whom Jahye met with are not known. However, it would have been difficult to ask strangers to pay for temple renovations without a baseline connection or relationship, so it is likely that these people were either already acquainted with Jahye or had personal or familial ties to Goryeo.

Goryeo monks received support from the Mongol ruling class, such as the Goryeo-born Yuan eunuch and Empress Qi, who were viewed negatively by the Goryeo state, and they themselves settled in the Mongol Empire and helped the Goryeo people who came to Dadu. Yi Gok, who wrote the inscription of “The Jangansa Jungheungbi,” also wrote many other articles, including inscriptions. Among them was an epitaph for Haewon, the first head of Sungeun Bokwonsa, discussed earlier.⁴⁴ After Haewon’s death, thirty of his disciples asked Yi Gok to write an epitaph for Haewon. Yi Gok recorded the background of his writing for the epitaph, noting that when he came to Dadu in 1333 to take the Yuan civil service examination, he stayed in Haewon’s chambers and became associated with Haewon and his disciples. Although this story is Yi Gok’s personal experience, it is enough to suggest that Haewon, who was honored in Yuan and stayed in Dadu for a long time as the head of the imperial temple, and his disciples would have supported the Goryeo people who came to Dadu for various reasons, including providing shelter and helping them adjust to life in the city.

Among Yi Gok’s writings, there is a biography 行狀 of Han Yeong 韓永 that describes Han Yeong’s accompanying his father, Han Sagi 韓謝奇, when he went to Yuan to follow Daebanggong 帶方公 Wang Jing 王澂 in 1279.⁴⁵ Han

Yeong spent his childhood in Dadu,⁴⁶ and following in his father’s footsteps, he participated in the *keshig* during the reign of Emperor Cheongzong Temur and held several central and provincial positions in Yuan. His eldest son, Han Hyoseon 韓孝先—Mongolian name Temur Buka—also participated in the *keshig*, and he, too, later held a number of government positions. Han Yeong’s second son, Han Jungbo 韓仲輔—Mongolian name Gwaneumno 觀音奴—and third son also served as officials in Yuan.

The fact that Han Yeong’s sons had Mongolian names and requested a biography from Yi Gok, a Goryeo scholar, and an epitaph for their father’s tombstone from Su Tianshi 蘇天爵, a Yuan scholar, respectively, shows that they adapted to the local environment and interacted with Yuan officials and scholars while continuing to interact with scholars and officials who came to Yuan from Goryeo. In the biography of Han Yeong, Yi Gok wrote that he was able to get to know him well because he and Han Yeong were “from the same region.”⁴⁷ The fact that they were from Goryeo played an important role in their relationship.

In the “An Bo myojimyeong” 安輔墓誌銘 written by Yi Gok’s son Yi Saek,⁴⁸ it says: “When I was in the capital, Eosa 御史 Han Jungbo said to me, ‘I know an official of the Ibu 吏部, the ministry of personnel, who knows Mr. An, so I recommended him for Hallim guksawon pyeonsugwan 翰林國史院編修官, but the Jungseoseong 中書省 official refused to accept him.’” An Bo is one of the Goryeo scholars who passed the Yuan civil service examination. After passing the examination, he was appointed to a position in the Lyao yang xingsheng 遼陽行省, but he resigned shortly afterward and returned home. It seems that he was disappointed that he could not get a central position even after passing the civil service examination. As the above quotation illustrates, it was not only Yi Saek who lamented this outcome, but also Han Gang’s second

gong. See *Goryeo History* 29 (King Chungryeol 5, March 10, the *jeongsa* 丁巳 day).

46 Yi Gok, *Gajeongjip*, Vol. 18, “Yuwon’goajungdaebuhanamburoyanggwan’gyeombonrojegun’orocho nggwannaegwonngsa jihabangsa jeungliphyeonjikhaksa gyeongchadowi goyanghu ikjeonghyehang’onghaengjang” 有元故亞中大夫 河南府路總管兼本路諸軍奧魯總管內勸農事 知河防事 贈集賢直學士 輕車都尉 高陽候 諡正惠韓公行狀. On Han Yeong, see Kwon 2021.

47 Yi Gok, *Gajeongjip*, Vol. 18, “Yuwon’goajungdaebuhanamburoyanggwan’gyeombonrojegun’orocho nggwannaegwonngsa jihabangsa jeungliphyeonjikhaksa gyeongchadowi goyanghu ikjeonghyehang’onghaengjang” 有元故亞中大夫 河南府路總管兼本路諸軍奧魯總管內勸農事 知河防事 贈集賢直學士 輕車都尉 高陽候 諡正惠韓公行狀.

48 Yi Saek, *Mokeun mungo*, Vol. 19, “Gyerimbuyun si mungyeonggong An seonsaeng myojimyeong byeongseo” 鷄林府尹諡文敬公安先生墓誌銘并序.

43 Yi Saek, *Mokeun mungo*, Vol. 2, “Bogaesan Jijangsa jungsugi” 寶蓋山地藏寺重修記.

44 Yi Gok, *Dongmunseon*, Vol. 118, “Dae Sungeun Bokwonsa Goryeo jeil daesa Wongong bi” 大崇恩福元寺高麗第一代師圓公碑.

45 At that time, in addition to Han Sagi, twenty-five sons of Goryeo dignitaries traveled with Daebang-

son, Han Jungbo, who had recommended him for a central position in Yuan. This anecdote shows that the Goryeo people who had settled in the Mongol Empire interacted with newcomers from Goryeo and helped them to adapt to the changes and to achieve their goals.

Individual lives are both influenced by and a reflection of the broader society. To understand an individual life, it is necessary to understand the society in which the individuals live, and to understand a society, it is necessary to consider the lives of the individuals in that society. The range of individuals' stories is wide, and the narratives associated with them are varied. In contrast, the narrative of the state, the higher-level political community that has the most influence on an individual's life, is often monolithic. This relationship between individuals and states is easily recognized in the present; it is no less important to the understanding of history.

It would require a constant complementary process between individual and national narratives to construct a comprehensive history of a given period. The narrative of national history, with its relatively clear boundaries and scope, can weave together various aspects of individuals' lives that seem unrelated at first glance; individual narratives, which reflect different aspects of society in different ways, can add complexity and nuance to the narrow narrative of national history. In current historical research, however, individual lives tend to be included or excluded based on the narrative of national history, rather than being studied in their own right. This tendency means the exploration of the lives of diverse individuals often ends up reinforcing the narrative of national history rather than helping to reconstruct or expand it.

The purpose of this study was to examine the various motivations of the Goryeo people who crossed the border in the context of Goryeo-Mongol relations in the 13th and 14th centuries and to examine the impact of their lives on Goryeo politics and society from a non-dichotomous perspective. As we have seen, the Goryeo-Mongol relations during this period provided an environment for people from all walks of life to experience the wider world. The outcome of these Goryeo lives under such circumstances was of primary importance to the individuals involved, but it also played an important role in the unfolding of the national history of Goryeo and the history of Korea. Of course, in the latter case, the people involved were not necessarily aiming for such an outcome; it was, rather, a result of their lives being led in different directions. And the Goryeo kings were one of those individuals as well. In other words, many key

events in the national history of the Goryeo dynasty during this period were the result of the Goryeo people's various levels of acceptance and adaptation to the Mongol Empire, rather than the result of Goryeo's total resistance to Mongol interference.

References

- Chang, Dong-ik. 1990. "Won e jinchulhan Goryeoin" [Goryeo People Entering Yuan]. *Minjok munhwa nonchong* 11: 37–78.
- . 1994. *Goryeo hugi oegyosa yeongu* [A Study of Diplomatic History in the Late Goryeo Period]. Seoul: Ilchokak.
- . 1999. "Mongo e tuhanghan Hong Bok-won Dagu buja" [Hong Bok-won and Hong Dagu Who Surrendered to the Mongols]. *Yeoksa bipyeong* [Critical Review of History] 48: 274–85.
- Cho, Myung-je. 2008. "14 segi Goryeo jisikin ui ip-Won gwa sunrye" [The Influx into Yuan 元 and the Pilgrimage of Goryeo 高麗 Intellectuals in the Fourteenth-century]. *Yeoksa wa gyeonggye* [History & the Boundaries] 69: 7–40.
- Choi, Jongsuk. 2017. "13–15 segi cheonha jilseo ha eseo Goryeo wa Joseon ui gukka jeongcheseong" [The National Identity of Koryo And Chosun under Chinese World Order in the 13th–15th Century]. *Yeoksa bipyeong* [Critical Review of History] 121: 10–44.
- Chu, Chae-hyok. 1974. "Hong Bok-won ilga wa Ryeo-Won gwangye" [Hong Bok-won Family and Goryeo-Yuan Relations]. *Sabak yeongu* [The Review of Korean History] 24: 1–53.
- Chung, Kwang, trans. with annotation. 2010. *Yeokju wonbon Nogeoldae* [The Original *Laoqida* with Translations and Annotations]. Seoul: Bakmunsa.
- Do, Hyeon Chul. 1999. *Goryeo mal sadaebu ui jeongchi sasang yeongu* [A Study on the Political Thought of the Koryo Dynasty]. Seoul: Ilchokak.
- . 2021. *Yi gok ui gaehyeokron gwa yugyo munmyeongron* [Yi Gok's Reform Theory and Confucian Civilization Theory]. Paju: Jisik-sanup Publishing.
- Endicott-West, Elizabeth. 1986. "Imperial Governance in Yüan Times." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46 (2): 523–49.
- Hideto, Kitamura 北村秀人. 1964. "Kōrai ni okeru Seitōkōshō ni tsuite" 高麗に於ける征東行省について [A Study on Jeongdong haengseong in

- Goryeo]. *Joseon hakbo* 朝鮮學報 32: 1–73.
- Jung, Byung-sam. 2012. “Munsusa janggyeongbi wa Won ganseopgi bulgyo sin’ang ui han gyeonghyang” [The Stele of Offering Tripitaka at Munsusa and a Trend of Buddhist Belief in the Period of Mongol Intervention]. *Hanguk munhwa* 60: 3–36.
- Jung, Donghun. 2016. “From a Lord to a Bureaucrat: The Change of Koryŏ King’s Status in the Korea-China Relations.” *The Review of Korean Studies* 19 (2): 115–36.
- Kim, Byong-gon. 2007. “Won ui jonggyogwan gwa Goryeo ip-Wonseung ui haengjeok” [The Study on Religious View of Yuan(元) and Activities of Abroad Studying Monks in Korea(高麗)]. *Bulgyo-Yongu* 27: 215–57.
- Kim, Ho-Dong. 2006. “Mongol jeguk gwa dae-Won” [The Mongol Empire and ‘Da Yuan’]. *YOKSA HAKBO* 192: 221–53.
- . 2007. *Mongol jeguk gwa Goryeo* [The Mongol Empire and Goryeo]. Seoul: Seoul National University Press.
- Kim, In-ho. 2016. “Goreyo hugi Yi Jehyeon ui Jungguk munin gwaui gyoryu wa Mangwondang” [A Study for Mangundang and Lee Jaehyun]. *The Yeoksa and Silhak* 61: 215–42.
- Koh, Byong-ik. 1961. “Ryeodae Jeongdong haengseong ui yeongu 1” [A Study on the Jeongdong haengseong of Goryeo Dynasty 1]. *YOKSA HAKBO* 14: 45–76.
- . 1962. “Ryeodae Jeongdong haengseong ui yeongu 2” [A Study on the Jeongdong haengseong of Goryeo Dynasty 2]. *YOKSA HAKBO* 19: 121–97.
- Kwon, Yong-Cheol. 2019. *Wondae junghugi jeongchisa yeongu* [The Political History of the Mid to Late Yuan Empire]. Seoul: Onsaem.
- . 2021. “Won jeguk ui Goryeoin gwallo Han Yeong ui haengjeok e daehan geomto” [Review of the Activities of Goryeo Official Hanyeong(韓永) in Yuan Empire]. *Inmun nonchong* [THE JOURNAL OF HUMAN STUDIES] 56: 97–117.
- Lee, HyungWoo. 2012. “Goryeo hugi iju e daehan ilgochal” [A Study on the Emigration in the Late Koryŏ Dynasty: Focused on the Case of the People Who Surrendered]. *Hanguksa yeongu* [The Journal of Korean History] 158: 269–300.
- Lee, Ik-joo. 2013. *Yi Saek ui sam gwa saenggak* [The Life and Thoughts of Yi Saek]. Seoul: Ilchokak.
- Lee, Jeong sin. 2001. “Yeongnyeong gong Wangjun yeongu: Mongo chimllakki wangjok ui moseup” [A Study on Yeongnyeong gong 永寧公 Wangjun: Royalty during the Mongol Invasion Period]. *Minjok munhwa yeongu* [Korean Classics Studies] 35: 351–91.
- Lee, Kang Hahn. 2010. “Chin-Won gwa ban-Won eul neomeoseo” [For a New Understanding of the 13th and 14th Centuries]. *Yeoksa wa hyeonsil* [Quarterly Review of Korean History] 78: 105–59.
- . 2013. *Goryeo wa Won jeguk ui gyoyeok ui yeoksa* [The History on Trade between Goryeo and the Yuan Empire]. Paju: Changbi Publishers.
- . 2024. *Eotteon jeguk gwa ui jou: 13–14 segi Goryeo wa Mongol Won* [Encounters with an Empire]. Seoul: Kyungin Publishing.
- Lee, Myungmi. 2015. “Wonjong dae Goryeo cheuk dae Mongol jeongryejeok uiryejeok sahaeng yangsang gwa geu baegyeong: 1273 nyeon (Wonjong 14) Goryeo cheuk hachaekbong sahaeng sarye reul jungsim euro” [A Study on the Patterns and the Backgrounds of Goryeo’s Routine and Ceremonial Envoy Trips to the Mongol Empire during the Reign of King Wonjong(元宗): With a Focus on the Case of Hachaekbong(賀册封) Envoy Trip of Goryeo in 1273]. *Hanguk munhwa* 69: 173–203.
- . 2016. *13–14 segi Goryeo Mongol gwangye yeongu: Jeongdong haengseong seungsang buma Goryeo gukwang geu bokhapjeok wisang e daehan tamgu* [A Study on the Goryeo-Mongol Relationship in the 13th–14th centuries: An Exploration of the Complexity of the Status of the Jeongdong haengsung seungsang, Goryeo King’s Son-in-law]. Seoul: Hyeon.
- . 2020. “Goryeo sidae bulgyo gwallyeon geumseokmun chansul ui yangsang gwa Goryeo sahoe ui seonggyeok” [The Aspect of Writing Inscriptions on Buddhism in Goryeo Period and the Characteristics of Goryeo Society]. *Hanguk jungsesa yeongu* [The Journal of Korean Medieval History] 60: 157–91.
- . 2022. *Goryeo Mongol e gada* [Goryeo, Go to the Mongol Empire]. Seoul: Sechang Media.
- . 2023. “Mongol e daehan Goryeo ui gongnyeo yangsang gwa baegyeong” [Patterns and Background of Goryeo ‘Gongnyeo(貢女)’ to the Mongol Empire]. *HAKLIM* 52: 175–222.
- Lee, Myungmi, and Donghun Jung, trans. 2024. *Mongol paegwon ha ui Goryeo: jeguk jilseo wa wangguk ui daeeung* [Goryeo under Mongol Control: The Imperial Rule and Responses of the Kingdom]. Seoul: Seoul National

University Press.

- Masahiko, Morihira 森平雅彦. 2006. “Shushigaku no Kōrai denrai to tai Gen kankei (sono ichi): Ankyō Shushigakusho shōraisetsu no saikentō” 朱子学の高麗伝来と対元関係(その一) —安珣朱子学書将來說の再検討— [Introduction of the Zhu Xi school of Neo-Confucianism into Goryeo and Relationship with Yuan, Part 1: A Review of An-Hyang’s Contribution]. *Shien* 史淵 [The Journal of History] 143: 65–103.
- . 2011a. “Jeguk dongbyeon eseo Ilbon eul mangneunda” [Defending Japan on the East Frontier of the Empire]. In *13–14 segi Goryeo Mongol gwangye tamgu* [An Exploration on the Relations of Goryeo and Mongol in the 13th and 14th centuries], edited by Han-Jung gyoryu yeonguwon [Northeast Asian History Foundation and Kyungpook National University], 159–94. Seoul: Northeast Asian History Foundation.
- . 2011b. “Shushigaku no Kōrai denrai to tai Gen Kankei (sono ni): shoki dankai ni okeru Torugaku, Keshiku seido to no setten” 朱子学の高麗伝来と対元関係(その二) —初期段階における禿魯花・ケシク制度との接点— [Introduction of the Zhu Xi School of Neo-Confucianism into Goryeo and Relationship with Yuan, Part 2: Relations to Turay and Kesig at the Early Stage]. *Shien* 史淵 [The Journal of History] 148: 39–67.
- . 2013. *Mongoru haken ka no Kōrai: Teikoku chitsujo to ōkoku no taiō* モンゴル覇権下の高麗: 帝国秩序と王国の対応 [Korea under Mongol Hegemony: Imperial Order and a Monarchy’s Response to It]. Nagoya: The University of Nagoya Press.
- Oh, Ki-Seung. 2017. “Yodong Goryeoin Hongssi seryeok ui hyeongseong gwa Hong Gun-Sang ui haengjeok e daehan gochal” [A Study on Formation of Liaodong Goryeo People Group Hong Clan and Achievements of Hong Gun-Sang]. *CHIYEOK KWA YEOKSA* 40: 45–94.
- Robinson, David M. 2023. “Koryō in the Mongol Empire.” In *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire*, edited by Michal Biran and Hodong Kim, 679–706. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wang, Ha, Jaeyoung Choi, and Jaewon Ryu, trans. with annotation. 2012. *Yeokju Park tongsa eonhae* [Park tongsa in Hunmin jeongeum with Translations and Annotations]. Seoul: Hakgobang.
- Wi, Eun-sook. 1997. “Won ganseop gi dae-Won muyeok: *Nogeoldae* reul jungsim euro” [A Study on Trade with the Yuan Dynasty during the Yuan Interference Period: Focusing on *Nogeoldae*]. *CHIYEOK KWA YEOKSA*

4: 53–94.

- Yi, Kae-seok. 2013. *Goryeo dae-Won gwangye* [Studies on the Goryeo-Da Yuan Relations] Seoul: Jisik-sanup Publishing.
- Yoon, Eun-sook. 2016. “Dae-Won jeguk malgi Gi hwanghu ui naeseon sido” [Empress Gi’s Attempt of Abdication in the Late Yuan Empire]. *Mongolhak* [Mongolian Studies] 47: 1–26.

LEE Myungmi (mmlee4@knu.ac.kr) received her PhD from Seoul National University with the thesis “Relation between Goryeo and the Mongol Empire, and the Changes that Occurred in Goryeo Kings Status” (in Korean). Her research focuses on history of the Goryeo-Mongol relations, with an interest in the interaction of heterogeneous factors, and she is also interested in women’s issues in the Goryeo period. She is currently working as an assistant professor in the Department of History at Kyungpook National University.

Abstract

The study of Korean history in the 13th and 14th centuries, when Eurasia was unified with the rise of the Mongol Empire, is still dominated by a dichotomous view of Mongol interference and Goryeo resistance. However, the relationship with the Mongol Empire imposed constraints and burdens on the Goryeo state, but it also provided new opportunities for the Goryeo people. The state-to-state relationship between Goryeo and the Mongol Empire had a profound effect on the lives of the people who lived during this period. The individual trajectories that various groups of Goryeo people, including women, eunuchs, monks, and scholars, followed in the Mongol Empire after their voluntary or involuntary journeys to the Mongol Empire under these external circumstances influenced events that, whether they intended it or not, in turn, had a decisive impact on the unfolding of Goryeo and Korean history. While the Goryeo state drew lines and judged their lives based on their attitudes toward the Goryeo state, in the Mongol Empire, where the Goryeo people settled, they formed bonds and networks of relationships that were somewhat independent of such lines and judgments by the Goryeo state. This article aims to overcome the national historical perspectives of interference and resistance that have been central to understanding the Goryeo-Mongol relations by examining the diverse backgrounds of the Goryeo people who traveled to the Mongol Empire and the trajectories of their lives there from their perspectives.

Keywords: Goryeo-Mongol relations, the national historical perspectives, tributary women, eunuchs, confucian scholars