

Articles

From Liaodongese Refugee to
Ming Loyalist: The Historiography of
the Sanggok Ma, a Ming Migrant
Descent Group in Late Joseon Korea

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Introduction

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Joseon¹ Korea (1392-1910), biographies were written of Ming migrants who had entered Joseon as deserters from the Ming armies during the 1592-1598 Imjin War or as refugees who fled to Joseon in the decade following the 1618 commencement of the Manchu invasion of Liaodong and Liaoxi. Despite the fact that these migrants were not welcomed at the time by the Joseon court, they were declared by the Joseon court in the eighteenth century to be Ming loyalists who had fled to Joseon to escape the Manchu Qing. As such, during the reigns of Jeongjo (r. 1776-1800) and Sunjo (r. 1800-1834), they were provided with hagiographic biographies which were anthologized in collections official and unofficial, in which these deserters and refugees were declared exemplars of the Ming loyalism that had become part of the official narrative of the Joseon court. At the same time, the descendants of these migrants were raised from their relatively humble “submitting-foreigner” status to the much more prestigious “imperial subject” status. This in turn brought the possibility of positions in the military bureaucracy and a role in court-sponsored Ming loyalist rituals.

Biography, as a branch of history, has been attracting renewed interest, as is attested by a recent round-table published in the *American Historical Review*. One participant in this round-table, Jochen Hellbeck (2009), asserts the importance of analyzing biographical materials—including diaries,

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1. Romanization of Korean names and terms follows the Revised Romanization. An exception is made for the names of Korean authors writing in English, in which case their preferred romanization is followed. In the case of Chinese migrants to Joseon, the migrants themselves are treated as Chinese and so pinyin romanization is used for their names, even as Revised Romanization is used for their descendants. Thus, at times, members of the same descent group will seem to have slightly different family names.

autobiographies and lives—in order to explore the “institutions, social practices, and self-practices” which in some periods “coalesce to form veritable force fields in which a heightened biographical consciousness” may take shape. Hellbeck’s own work explores the vital role of diaries and biographies in the Soviet Union, which he sees as being produced by both state-sponsorship and individual enthusiasm. He discusses the writing of biographies and diaries as an expression of people’s enthusiasm for the utopian project of the Russian revolution, noting even Stalin himself used biographies to produce the new socialist man, and the Soviet bureaucracy made an appropriate biography a requirement for gaining any important job.

With Hellbeck’s broad concerns in mind, this paper will discuss the creation of biographies of Ming migrants, considering a number of groups but with a focus on one migrant in particular, Ma Shunshang 麻舜裳 or Ma Pengzhi 麻蓬直, the founder of the Sanggok Ma 上谷麻 descent group. As with the Stalinist biographies and diaries of bureaucrats, soldiers and the spouses of purged officials discussed by Hellbeck, these late Joseon biographies of Ming migrants were written under the aegis of a particular ideological project, in this case the Ming loyalist ethos and the ideal Confucian world advocated by the eighteenth-century Joseon court and the Noron faction. Moreover, as with biographies produced under Stalin, these texts were not generated exclusively at the impetus of the state. On the one hand, the biographies of Ming migrants were formed within the state-created category of imperial subjects, whereby the heterogeneous community of Ming migrants were formed into a coherent category with an equally coherent biographical tradition; the limited sources available discussing these migrants were thus often transformed to make the Ming migrants more suitable subjects of hagiography. On the other hand, the descent groups so honored responded by producing their own biographies, which accorded in part with the court-sponsored biographies but which transformed the subject matter in a direction of their own liking. Late Joseon biographies of Ming migrants were formed through the intersection of the divergent interests of the Joseon court and the migrant descent groups, a process which is visible within the text of the biographies themselves.

Ming Loyalist Ideology and Ming Migrant Descent Groups

Ming migrants to Joseon were a diverse group of refugees, deserters and vagabonds. However, late eighteenth-century Ming migrant biographies, often gathered together in anthologies, presupposed that Ming migrants belonged to one coherent category of people. In this the biographies reflected a policy of the Joseon state originating in the 1750s to distinguish Ming migrant descent groups from other “submitting-foreigner” (Kor. *hyanghwain* 向化人) descent groups by categorizing them as “imperial subjects” (Kor. *hwangjoin* 皇朝人), and by encouraging their participation in Ming loyalist court ritual. At the same time, court policy after 1750 presupposed a biography of the Ming migrants wherein their decision to enter Joseon was driven by their hostility to the Manchu Qing and their belief that Joseon was the last remaining outpost of Confucian culture. Indeed, as the Joseon court engaged in the difficult task of finding the genuine Ming migrants among the submitting-foreigner tax category, it often sought to uncover genuine biographic information by which it could confirm the origins of the migrants in question. However, the desire to uncover genuine sources never overwhelmed the far greater desire to find appropriate participants in the court’s Ming loyalist rituals, so not only were many submitting-foreigners declared descendants of Ming migrants despite often very shaky evidence, but each grant of imperial subject status tended to expand the range of people claiming membership in the category.

Some version of submitting-foreigner status had been used since the Silla dynasty to settle people of the frontier (Jeon 1972). During the early Joseon, this status involved the granting of tax protection and land for a limited period to Jurchen, Japanese and Ryukyans who, it was worried, would otherwise be involved in brigandage on Joseon’s frontiers (Won 2009; Han Seong-ju 2006; Han Mun-jong 2001; Robinson 1992); in lieu of exemption from most tax and corvée obligations, submitting-foreigners were often required, as Im Hak-seong (2008) shows, to pay a tribute in fish to the Board of Rites (Kor. *Yejo* 禮曹). The Imjin War (1592-1598) and the wars of the Ming-Qing transition in Liaodong and Liaoxi (1618-1644) brought large numbers of Ming Chinese deserters and refugees into Joseon; precise numbers are hard to find, but the population of refugees from Liaodong during the 1620s rose in some accounts to well

above 100,000 (Han Myeong-gi 1999, 152-56 and 280-86). Although many were later forcibly removed from Joseon, the descendants of those who remained in Joseon were also administered according to the same submitting-foreigner category that was used for other peoples. Indeed, up to the mid-eighteenth century, the descendants of Jurchen, Japanese, and Chinese were alike in being administered by this protected, unprestigious, but by now hereditary category (Bohnet 2011).² However among these, a number gained some modicum of social status through their knowledge of particular skills, notably weapon and gunpowder production, interpreting, geomancy, and soldiering (Han Myeong-gi 1999, 152-56). Some very few gained more considerable prominence, among them Li Chenglong 李成龍 whose descendants had already gained positions in the military bureaucracy by the seventeenth century. Notably, Li Chenglong himself, a refugee from Mao Wenlong 毛文龍 (1576-1629)'s base at Ka Island, was later described as a descendant of the Ming general Li Chengliang 李成梁 (1526-1615) via Li Rumei 李如梅, Li Chengliang's son (Bohnet 2011, 498-99).

The growth of Ming loyalism, which Heo Tae-yong (2009) refers to as the *Zhonghua* inheritance consciousness (Kor. *Junghwa gyeseung uisik* 中華繼承意識),³ and the attendant ritual practices during the eighteenth century, by which Joseon court and elites increasingly ritualized their assumed status as the last remaining outpost of Ming legitimacy, significantly transformed the social status of Ming Chinese submitting-foreigners. During the late seventeenth century, Joseon elites, partly in response to the conquest of China by the barbarian Qing, increasingly re-imagined Joseon elites and the Joseon court as the only true heirs to the Confucian and Chinese tradition. In 1704, King Sukjong (r. 1674-1720) established a shrine to the Ming Wanli Emperor, the Altar of Gratitude (Kor. Daebodan 大報壇),⁴ on the palace grounds. This shrine itself, as Kye (2011) argues, was established despite the opposition of the Soron bureaucratic faction

2. Other work on late Joseon submitting-foreigners includes that of John Duncan (2000), Kyung-koo Han (2007), Seo Geun-sik (2009) and No Hye-gyeong (2009).

3. *Zhonghua* 中華 can be translated as China, but in accord with Heo's general concern to differentiate the sino-centrism of Joseon's elites from current nationalist conceptions of China and Korea, I am leaving *Zhonghua* untranslated.

4. This translation follows Saeyoung Park (2011).

and with the substantial support of the Noron faction, perhaps because it involved royal support for a Noron Ming loyalist program to establish a similar private shrine, the Mandongmyo 萬東廟,⁵ in Chungcheong Province. The key backer of the project, however, were not the officials of the Noron faction but the monarch, Sukjong, who had throughout his reign successfully manipulated factional politics to his own advantage, and who used this shrine to assert his own primacy as the chief officiant in rituals to the fallen Ming monarchy; it also provided him an acceptable continuation to the covert anti-Qing military preparation of his predecessors Hyojong (r. 1649-1659) and Hyeonjong (r. 1659-1674). Indeed, in the first few years after the establishment of the Altar of Gratitude, Sukjong offered sacrifices directly to the Wanli Emperor, although ultimately his interest faded and he took a much less active role (Kye 2011, 57-98).

Royal interest in the Ming loyalist project revived under Yeongjo (r. 1724-1776) and Jeongjo, although, as Kye (2011, 111-34) argues, this revival represented less a continuation of the project under Sukjong than a reinterpretation of the altar to place greater emphasis on royal power vis-à-vis the powerful *yangban* officials. During the early period of Yeongjo's reign, Yeongjo allowed the rituals to languish as they had during the last years of Sukjong's reign and under Gyeongjong (r. 1720-1724). However, in 1749, Yeongjo both increased his direct participation in the Altar of Gratitude and strengthened Joseon's claim of inheritance of the Ming's legitimacy with the expansion of the sacrifices to include the Hongwu Emperor (r. 1368-1398) and the Chongzhen Emperor (r. 1627-1644), the first and the last emperors respectively (Haboush 1988, 40-47; Kye 2011, 101-34). Yeongjo's commencement of sacrifices to the Hongwu Emperor proved especially controversial, ostensibly because the Hongwu Emperor could not be shown to have aided Joseon militarily in the manner of the Wanli

5. Mandongmyo 萬東廟 may be crudely translated as the All-Streams-Flow-East (萬折必東) Shrine. This name refers to a passage found in the chapter 28 (Ch. "Youzuo" 宥坐) of *Xunzi* 荀子 in which Confucius tells Zigong 子貢 that the inevitably eastward direction for streams (true for the north China plain) is what one can learn about human morality from watching the water. This passage is often interpreted to refer to the unbreakable relationship of a loyal official with his monarch. For the original text, see the Wang Zhonglin edition of *Xunzi* (1974), pages 407-08. For the establishment of the Mandongmyo, see O Gap-gyun (1969).

Emperor or to have any particularly important association with anti-Qing hostility as had the Chongzhen Emperor. Perhaps a more important reason for the controversy was the fact that the Hongwu Emperor was frequently used as a shorthand in court discussion for a strong monarch exercising royal prerogative vis-à-vis court officials, and indeed it is notable that after Yeongjo's expansion of the altar's focus to encompass the Hongwu Emperor, the Hongwu Emperor surpassed both the Wanli and Chongzhen Emperors to become the primary focus of the rituals. Moreover, following the 1749 expansion, Yeongjo took a prominent role, offering sacrifice directly 84% of the time (Kye 2004; 2011, 111-34). Such prominent emphasis on the rituals in the Altar of Gratitude continued under Jeongjo, who participated directly in sacrifice 96% of the time; unlike Yeongjo, Jeongjo de-emphasized the Hongwu Emperor, instead placing considerable rhetorical weight on the vital importance of the "grand meaning of *The Spring and Autumn Annals*" (Kor. *Chunchu daeui* 春秋大義). This, according to Kye (2011, 139-62), reveals concern on Jeongjo's part to maintain what had become a vital ideological foundation of the Joseon state in the face of the growing acceptance of Qing hegemony within Joseon and the entrance of rival ideological systems including Catholicism. In this Jeongjo succeeded at least in part, for the rituals at the Altar of Gratitude continued to be an absolutely vital aspect of Joseon court ritual until the Japanese expulsion of Qing influence in 1894.⁶

Ming loyalist ritualism was also part of a general trend during the late Joseon towards commemoration of the Imjin War and the wars with the Qing, in the process of which numerous participants in the war, major and minor, saw their acts commemorated through private and public rituals and the creation of appropriate biographies. Frequently, this process brought to court attention families and communities which were otherwise of low or doubtful social status (Park 2011). Examples of figures whose acts during the war underwent progressively more expansive biographical commemoration include such figures as the great admiral Yi Sun-sin (Park

6. However, Kye (2011, 191-249) argues that the Altar of Gratitude was the model for the Ring Hill Altar (Kor. Hwangudan 圓丘壇) which Gojong (r. 1863-1907) established to sacrifice directly to Heaven as part of his assertion of imperial prerogatives in 1897.

2011, 115-33; Jeong 2007), Nongae, a “professional entertainer” or *gisaeng* 妓生 who was widely believed to have killed a Japanese general by pulling him with her to their collective death (Jung 2009) and the Buddhist monk Yujeong 惟政 who led military activity against the Japanese (Park 2011, 140-78). A similar process may be found in the depiction of Ming migrants who were increasingly imagined to have come to Joseon motivated by loyalty to the Ming and hostility to the Qing, and whose ancestors were often thought to have served in the Imjin War against the Japanese (Bohnet 2011). This narrative was clearly useful for the Joseon court, which could use the presence of Ming loyalists on Joseon soil to bolster its claims to be the last remnant of Ming legitimacy. The narrative also had significant implications for the transformation of the social status of these lineages, as they were thus removed from the submitting-foreigner category which they shared with Jurchen and Japanese and placed in a new category, that of imperial subjects. This distinction reified them as remnant and loyal subjects of the one true empire, the defunct Ming whose mantle the Joseon court claimed. As with the *Zhonghua* inheritance consciousness and the rituals at the Altar of Gratitude, these processes under Yeongjo continued to the end of the Joseon dynasty, becoming the genesis of a series of new imperial subject lineages which, though small in population, maintained a shared identity into the 1990s (Mason 1991).⁷

A series of bureaucratic processes were implicated in this creation of imperial subjects. Notably, the revival of interest in Ming loyalist migrants corresponded with the renewed interest in the Altar of Gratitude under Yeongjo, who, beginning especially in 1754, only five years after the expansion of the rituals to include the Hongwu and Chongzhen Emperors, made a particular investigation of the social status of one Yi Hwon 李萱. Yi

7. In the late 1980s, Pung Yeong-seop (1989) wrote one of the last of a long line of texts produced by members of these imperial subject lineages themselves. At the beginning of this collection of sources concerning Ming loyalist migrants to Joseon, he lists the nineteen members of the editorial board, who are, without exception, each a representative of key imperial subject lineages, mostly with household seats linking them to a Chinese place-name. By no means do these nineteen lineages exhaust the total number of lineages which claim a Ming loyalist migrant origin—indeed, they do not include the Ban descent group discussed in this article, whose household seat is usually given as Yodong (Ch. Liaodong 遼東). It should also be noted that while there are a great many Ming imperial subject lineages, the total population of each lineage is generally very small.

Hwon was thought to be a descendant, via the Ming migrant Li Yingren 李應仁, of the great Ming general Li Rusong 李如松 (1549-1598), a hero of the Imjin War. Having discovered to his horror that Yi Hwon was classified as a submitting-foreigner, Yeongjo had him reclassified as an imperial subject, and began a process which Bohnet (2011) argues involved the formation of a new, state-sponsored descent group of Li Chengliang's lineage which encompassed both this branch and the already well-established descendants of Li Rumei, mentioned above. Moreover, in the process of reclassifying Yi Hwon, Yeongjo also discovered and reclassified as Chinese, three other descent groups, the Cho 楚, the Ban 潘 and the Jeon 田. As imperial subjects, these and other supposed descendants of Ming migrants maintained the tax-exemptions which they had previously enjoyed, but were able to take military exams and gain positions in the military bureaucracy (Bohnet 2011). Moreover, there were positions in the military bureaucracy reserved for imperial subjects, including positions in the Han Brigades (Kor. *Hallyeo* 漢旅) and the Altar of Gratitude guards (Kor. *Daebodan sujikgwan* 守直官). They also gained ritual association with the Altar of Gratitude in a manner that linked them closely to the Joseon monarch. Examples of this ritual participation included the king bringing the descendants of Ming migrants and Korean anti-Qing martyrs to the steps of the royal audience hall in Changdeok Palace to participate in Ming loyalist rituals while facing the Altar of Gratitude.⁸ The king would also regularly summon imperial subjects to his presence after he had finished his role in the rituals before the altar.⁹

The challenge for the Joseon court was to establish clearly who belonged to the category Ming loyalist. Because imperial subjects not only possessed tax exemptions but were also linked with the core ritual project of the Joseon court, this inevitably led to submitting-foreigners themselves petitioning the court to recognize their membership in imperial subject

8. *Yeongjo sillok* 82: 2b, 1756/01/14: “上召見相臣, 將臣, 命書三皇忌辰望拜綸音. 三皇即大明高皇帝, 神宗, 毅宗也. 自是凡於忌辰曉, 上必齋潔, 率皇朝人遺裔及丙子立節諸臣子孫, 望拜於正殿陞, 上歲以爲常.”

9. *Yeongjo sillok* 116: 16b-17a, 1771/03/19: “庚申: 上詣崇政殿月臺, 行毅皇忌辰望拜禮. 上俯伏久不起, 東宮扶掖, 請還內, 大臣及藥房提調皆力請, 不聽. 九卿連進, 攀裾請還, 上始起, 召見皇朝人子孫.”; *Hwangjojin sajeok* fr. 1-8.

descent groups and their right to participate in Ming loyalist rituals. Usually, they would invoke the precedent of an earlier decision by which another branch of their descent group had been recognized. Frequently, petitioners for this status would also declare a biography of their migrant ancestor in accord with the Joseon court's Ming loyalist ideology, claiming that their ancestors had either participated in the Imjin War or had fled from China impelled specifically by loyalty to the Ming. There were two such cases under Sunjo (r. 1800-1834). The *Daily Record of the Office of the Custodian of Foreign Visitors* (Kor. *Jeongaeksa ilgi* 典客司日記) records petitions in 1806 by Ban Chung-gyeom 潘忠謙 of Geumhwa in Gangwon Province (who claimed membership in the same Ban family granted imperial subject status by Yeongjo in 1754) and Cheon Il-si 千一時 (a member of another Ming migrant family from Myeongcheon in Hamgyeong Province). Both Ban and Cheon requested the right to participate in Ming loyalist ritual at the Altar of Gratitude by referring not only to earlier precedent but also to their distinguished Ming loyalist ancestors. Ban Chung-gyeom, for instance, stated that his ancestor Pan Tengyun 潘騰雲 had, after the invasion of China by the Manchu in 1644, left for Korea along with one Mo Wanren 墨萬仁, with both following the aforementioned Li Yingren. Ban Chung-gyeom further informed the court that Pan Tengyun had provided his services to the Joseon court by making gunpowder as well as sacrificial vessels. The family had then fallen completely into obscurity such that, Ban Chung-gyeom complained, even as other submitting-foreigners of Ming descent were reclassified, his family had been ignored; the pain that he suffered from not being able to participate in ritual at the Altar of Gratitude was considerable.¹⁰

In another case, Cheon Il-si, of North Hamgyeong Province, described how his ancestor, Qian Wanli 千萬里, in obedience to his mother who had named him Wanli ('ten thousand *li*')¹¹ and encouraged him to leave for far regions, chose to remain in Joseon after serving with the Ming armies during

10. *Gaksa deungnok* 101: 347-348; *Jeongaeksa ilgi*, Sunjo 06.03.15.

11. *Li* 里 (Kor. *ri*) is a traditional Chinese and Korean unit of distance, although it should be noted that the precise measure was different between Korea and China, and indeed varied according to period and region within China. Here 10,000 *li* should be seen as merely implying a very large distance.

the Imjin War. According to Cheon Il-si, following the Manchu invasion of Joseon in 1636-1637, Qian Wanli, heartbroken by the fall of the Ming, had traveled to northern Hamgyeong, eventually settling down in Myeongcheon 明川¹² which he selected because the first character of Myeongcheon was the same as the character for the Ming 明. However, settlement in Myeongcheon brought his descendants obscurity in a distant corner of Joseon.¹³

The response of the Joseon court to both these incidents was much the same.¹⁴ In both cases the Joseon officials initially acknowledged a complete lack of evidence for the circumstances of the migrants' arrival in Joseon, despite these circumstances being key to establishing the supposed loyalty to the Ming and hostility to the Qing of the migrant.¹⁵ Surprisingly the officials argued that this dearth of evidence was unexceptional, for "as a general rule, for imperial subjects, there is no reliable official or unofficial documentation from the time of their migration."¹⁶ Nevertheless, the Joseon court relied on the limited evidence available to prove that the descent group in question was, in fact, Ming Chinese in origin, saying of Qian Wanli, that "he was recorded as the Hwasan Lord already in the household registry in the capital, so there is no doubt that he was an imperial subject."¹⁷ In the case of Pan Tengyun, the officials merely pointed out records of Pan's presence in Joseon in gazetteers for Geumhwa and in household registration in Hanseong, Joseon's capital. Notably, Pan Tengyun's involvement in gunpowder production and the production of ritual implements for the Joseon court¹⁸ resulted in a brief reference to Pan Tengyun's flight from

12. "及夫丙子之亂，痛皇朝之淪喪，而慟哭都門，携挈妻子，轉入北關明川之地。"

13. *Gaksa deungnok* 101: 346; *Jeongaeksa ilgi*, Sunjo 06.02.19-27.

14. The court response to Cheon Il-si is found in *Gaksa deungnok* 101: 369-70-71; *Jeongaeksa ilgi* 1806/07/11. The court response to Ban Chung-gyeom is found in *Gaksa deungnok* 101: 70; *Jeongaeksa ilgi* 1806/03/17. The entire exchange, is also briefly summarized in the *Joseon Veritable Records* (Kor. *Joseon wangjo sillok* 朝鮮王朝實錄), *Sunjo sillok* 9: 33a, 1806/07/13.

15. For instance, concerning Qian Wanli, they argued that "there are no sources upon which officials may rely concerning the circumstances of Wanli's arrival in Joseon" (萬里東出時事蹟，雖無臣曹可據之文獻)，while concerning Ban Chung-gyeom, they say that "although he has made this appeal, we officials have not discovered any other documentary evidence" (有此呼籲，而臣曹無他事考之文蹟)。

16. "蓋皇朝人，當初出來時事蹟，實無公私文蹟之可據。"

17. "而京兆帳籍中，既以花山君載錄，則其為皇朝人無疑。"

18. "只有聖廟祭器改備記文中。"

Liaodong during the Chongzheng era,¹⁹ which, because it recorded him as Chinese and not Jurchen, safely established him as an imperial subject.²⁰ Evidence of Ming origin was not, of course, in and of itself evidence of Ming loyalism, but the officials treated it as sufficient to establish imperial subject status.

Ultimately, Joseon officials decided both petitions based on simple precedent for others in similar circumstances, arguing, for instance, for Cheon Il-si that three other Ming migrant descent groups in northern Hamgyeong, including the Gang 康,²¹ Ho 胡 and Cho 楚, “all received the special grace of Yeongjo and earlier kings and were allowed to participate in the rituals at the Altar of Gratitude. Only the descendants of Qian Wanli have been neglected and most certainly will have deep resentment at their missed chance, so it is vital that the right to participate in the court rituals be granted.”²² For Ban Chung-gyeom, they made reference to Yeongjo’s granting in 1754 of imperial subject status to the Ban descent group at the same time as to the Cheon 田, Yi 李 and Cho 楚 families, and the injustice of disallowing participation at the Altar of Gratitude only to the descendants of Pan Tengyun. That is to say, the Joseon court actively sought clear documentation, which it preferred to simple assertion when granting imperial subject status and the right to participate in Ming loyalist ritual. However, despite extraordinarily weak evidence from the two applicants, both were granted the right to participate on the basis of earlier precedent.

There was no actual evidence of Ming loyalism on the part of the ancestors of the Cheon and Ban descent groups in Korea. That being said, it is interesting that the two applicants themselves were clearly attempting to establish biographies of their ancestors which fit fully into the general narrative expected of them by the Joseon court. For instance, Ban Chung-gyeom claimed that his ancestors entered Joseon after 1644. This date, of

19. “騰雲本中華遼東人，崇禎年間，逃亂于此云云故。”

20. “亦以漢人載錄，則其為皇朝人，的實無疑。”

21. The Kang descent group here refers to the descendants of Kang Shijue 康世爵, a Ming refugee who gained prominent status in the late seventeenth century from his place of refuge in northern Hamgyeong thanks to his effective manipulation of connections to the high officials dispatched from the center (Bohnet 2012).

22. “康胡楚三姓，皆蒙英廟先朝特恩，入參於壇門望拜之列，萬里之子孫，獨為見漏，宜有向隅之嘆是白乎旃。… 似當許其參班是白乎矣。”

course, is improbable, as 1644 was long after the Qing was fully in control of Liaodong and all routes into Joseon were closed; and in any case, as discussed above, the court officials had found documents describing Pan Tengyun entering Joseon during the Chongzhen reign, which would have brought him in before 1644. However, this date had a rhetorical advantage for Ban Chung-gyeom, as it matched his own descent group's narrative with the death of the last Ming emperor. Indeed, the remainder of Ban Chung-gyeom's narrative only strengthened his ancestor's association with Ming loyalism, including his claims that Pan Tengyun's father died in battle (父歿於戰), presumably against the Qing, that Pan Tengyun's mother had committed suicide (母死於節) to avoid rape, and that Pan Tengyun's own moral strictures against wearing his hair in the Qing fashion (義不被髮) were his primary motivations in leaving for Joseon.

Similarly, Qian Wanli's descendant Cheon Il-si protected his ancestor against the accusation of filial impiety for living so far from his parents by claiming that Qian Wanli had stayed in Joseon in obedience to his mother's command. If Ban Chung-gyeom's claim that Pan Tengyun had arrived after 1644 is improbable, Cheon Il-si's claim that Qian Wanli was already lamenting the fall of the Ming between 1636 and 1637 is absolutely impossible, implying as it does truly prophetic abilities on Qian Wanli's part, for Beijing was not to fall for another eight years. The timing of Qian Wanli's departure for Myeongcheon between 1636 and 1637, however, links Qian Wanli's life-story with a key crisis in the relationship of the Joseon court to the Ming. This, combined with Qian Wanli's role in the Imjin War, his improbably early lamentation for the fall of the Ming, and the supposed choice of residence in Myeongcheon because of the coincidence of the first character, gave Qian Wanli a biography that described him as an exemplary representative of Ming loyalism within Joseon.

The implausibility of these narratives is less significant than the fact that both Cheon Il-si and Ban Chung-gyeom were attempting to discover biographies of their ancestors that accorded with an acceptable Ming loyalist narrative. Significantly, while the court officials clearly would have liked better sources, the poor quality of the sources was not an insuperable barrier to confirming imperial subject status. At the time of the migration, the original Ming migrants, with a few exceptions, were generally from a class of people entirely uninteresting to the Joseon court, and the surviving records

reflect this fact. The court officials were thus able to find records establishing the presence of Chinese settlers in communities around Joseon, and were able to discover that they were engaged in the typical activities of such settlers, but were not able to establish any other significant information. They certainly could not confirm the Ming loyalist claims of these migrants. Rather, the surviving sources at once confirmed the Ming origins of the original migrants and the generally undistinguished status of the migrants and their descendants after arrival; Pan Tengyun, for instance, was recorded as making gunpowder for the Joseon court and Qian Wanli was generally indistinguishable from other deserting Ming soldiers during the Imjin War. The Joseon court, however, was not particularly interested in contradicting the Ming loyalist claims of these descent groups, no doubt because the existence of Ming loyalist migrants in Joseon helped to confirm Joseon's status as the last outpost of the Ming political and cultural tradition.

Discovering a Ming Migrant Descent Group: The Case of the Sanggok Ma

Such was the desire of the Joseon court to discover Ming migrant descendants in Joseon that the court did not merely wait for Ming migrants to declare themselves, but even sought out Ming migrant descendants based on the available records. In contrast to Cheon Il-si and Ban Chung-gyeom, who used biographical details to assert their own social status, there were also cases where biographical notes concerning Ming migrants, produced by prominent Joseon officials, resulted in an official search being made for the descendants. An example of this process may be found in the case of Ma Shunshang, concerning whom Jeongjo launched a search on the basis of his appearance in earlier records. As a result of this search a new imperial subject descent group, the Sanggok Ma, came into being.

In the last year of his reign, Jeongjo ordered a search for the descendants of Ma Gui 麻貴, a Ming Commissioner-in-Chief (Ch. *dudu* 都督) during the Imjin War. Jeongjo declared that, having read through the records of Joseon's relationship with China during the Wanli period, he had paced up and down and been filled with a deep sadness. Jeongjo especially recalled

the Commissioner-in-Chief Ma Gui, who had led troops to Joseon during the Imjin War and whose glorious achievements could be compared to those of Li Rusong. What was key for Jeongjo was that Ma Gui's grandson Shunshang had apparently arrived in Joseon and conversed with mid-seventeenth century Joseon official Kim Yuk 金堉 (1580-1658) in an encounter which, Jeongjo declared, was recorded in Kim Yuk's journal (Kor. *ilgi* 日記).²³

“Journal” was most definitely an exaggeration. This text to which Jeongjo referred was Kim Yuk's miscellany entitled *The Brush Talk of Master Jamgok* (Kor. *Jamgok seonsaeng pildam* 潛谷先生筆譚) in which Kim Yuk included diverse stories, some more credible than others, but all based, as is generally true with such miscellanies, on anecdote and hearsay. In any case, within his *Brush Talk* Kim Yuk describes his encounter with a Ming migrant sericulture expert known as Ma Shunshang whom he encountered in Hongju in Chungcheong Province. The second half of this very short account is consumed with Ma's description of sericulture techniques in southern China. The first half, however, describes Kim Yuk's encounter as follows:

Vice-Commander (Ch. *tongzhi* 同知) Ma Shunshang is Chinese. When I went to Hongju, he came to petition me. He himself claims that he is the descendant of Ma Liguang, the Regional Commander of Zunhua (Ch. *Zunhua zongbing* 遵化總兵), and the grandson of Commissioner-in-Chief Ma Gui. Because the office of Vice-Commander is a hereditary one in his family, he is called Vice-Commander Ma. After his father died in Sarhu, Shunshang was captured by the enemy. He was among the enemy for six years before he ran away. In the *jeongmyo* year (1627) he was the officer in charge of provisions at Dengzhou when he encountered a storm off Myo Island. Three days later he reached Pungcheon. The other twenty-nine people in his boat had drowned, only he survived. He now lives in Gwangju (fr. 16).²⁴

23. *Jeongjo sillok* 54: 37a, 1800/03/10

24. “麻舜同知麻舜中朝人也。余到洪州時來謁自言遵化總兵里光子都督貴孫也。世襲指揮同知故稱同知云。父死於深河之戰。舜裳被虜在賊中六年而逃。丁卯年督糧登州。遇風於廟島。三日而至豐川。同舟二十九人溺死。渠獨生全。今于光州地云。”

Ma Shunshang's story, as reported by Kim Yuk, contains much that is entirely plausible. There were indeed a great many people in Liaodong and Shandong involved in military operations under the semi-renegade Ming general Mao Wenlong and Dengzhou was a major port of supply for Mao's base in Ka Island off the coast of Joseon. Moreover, very large numbers of refugees entered Joseon, both by land and by sea, from Liaodong and Shandong during the troublesome 1620s (Han Myeong-gi 1999, 280-6). It is noticeable, however, that Kim Yuk places some distance between himself and the account, clearly emphasizing that it was Ma himself (自傳) who provided the story. Kim Yuk also does not comment on the veracity of Shunshang's connection to his ancestor Ma Gui and Ma Liguang.

It is a testament both to the generally low status possessed by Ming refugees during the seventeenth century, and also, perhaps, to general suspicion of the veracity of Ma's claim, that, by the late eighteenth century, Ma's descendants had fallen entirely into obscurity, such that Jeongjo had to order a search. Ma Shunshang had been a mere curiosity to Kim Yuk, and a source of possible information concerning sericulture, and had evidently been of little interest to other contemporary Joseon officials. The bureaucratic category of imperial subject, however, transformed this obscure figure into a member of a ritually important category. Thus, during Jeongjo's reign, he was included within the *Sources for the Acts of Imperial Subjects* (Kor. *Hwangjoin sajeok* 皇朝人事蹟), a collection of sources concerning the lives of Ming loyalist refugees to Joseon. This text, which is contained within the Gyujanggak library but which is unfortunately lacking a preface, seems perhaps to have been part of the preparation for later biographical anthologies found in the *Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou* (Kor. *Jonju hwipyeon* 尊周彙編)—certainly some of the entries are nearly identical.²⁵ From internal evidence, it clearly reached its current form some time during the reign of Jeongjo (1776-1800), as it refers to Jeongjo as the current ruler (Kor. *dangjeo* 當宁), but can not have been written earlier than 1793 as events dated to that time are recorded in the text (KIKS 1993, sabu 3: 561). Whether or not it was in fact an official source, it clearly approaches the classification of imperial subjects from a perspective compatible with Joseon

25. For more on the *Collected Texts*, see section 4, "Anthologies Official and Unofficial" below.

court policy; the first nine pages are concerned entirely with the Joseon court's interaction with Ming migrants, especially with the Joseon court's granting of official posts to Ming migrants, and its encouragement of their participation in Ming loyalist ritual. In any case, by gathering together sources concerning Ming migrants, it treats an otherwise heterogeneous group as belonging to a coherent category of "imperial subjects."

The *Sources* clearly did not find Kim Yuk's text to be sufficiently in accord with the status of Ma Shunshang as an imperial subject, and so made a number of changes to Kim Yuk's description. Kim Yuk clearly introduced his account of Ma as something that Ma himself had told him, but the compilers of the *Sources* treated the entire story simply as fact. The compilers also eliminated Ma's description of sericulture, replacing it with the simple, but misleading claim that "Shunshang was good at sericulture, and his techniques have been passed down in Jeolla Province"—a statement for which this text is the only evidence.

Whether or not Jeongjo himself consulted the *Sources*, his demand in 1800 that a search be made for descendants of Ma Gui was couched in language which clearly treated Ma as an imperial subject. Thus, after describing at some length the achievements of Ma Gui, he then declared that Ma Gui's grandson had entered Joseon to avoid "the disorder" at the same time as "Peng and Wang and the others,"²⁶ referring to several other well known imperial subjects.²⁷ Furthermore, Jeongjo's call was successful. After Jeongjo's death, the mid-nineteenth century *Unofficial History of the Lesser Zhonghua* (Kor. *Sohwa oesa* 小華外史) drew information from a *Ma Genealogy* (Kor. *Ma-ssi gaseung* 麻氏家乘), which is clear evidence that a Sanggok Ma descent group had come into existence.²⁸ Indeed, the Sanggok Ma descent group exists today in South Korea, although it is very small (Ma 2005).

How genuine is the Sanggok Ma descent group? In a sense, that is the wrong question to ask. As Miyajima (2010) points out, Joseon decent groups come in a bewildering variety of forms, and many descent groups were united around a common ancestor only during the eighteenth

26. "與馮, 王諸人, 因難來投."

27. *Jeongjo sillok* 54: 37a, 1800/03/10

28. See section 4.

and nineteenth centuries. While it is not impossible, of course, that Ma Shunshang, as described by Kim Yuk, had left descendants, it does not seem that Kim Yuk himself was entirely convinced of Ma Shunshang's descent from Ma Gui. Much like Pan Tengyun and Qian Wanli, Ma Shunshang must be counted as one of the many Ming migrants concerning whose entrance into Joseon very little certainty may be expressed. Yet for Jeongjo, Shunshang's descent from the war hero was not at all to be doubted. The disappearance of Shunshang's descent group, and its swift reappearance at the instigation of Joseon court, may indeed have been the result of a vigorous search, but seems just as likely to have been a narrative agreed upon by the court and a submitting-foreigner descent group which claimed to be descendants of Ma Gui. Biographies of Ming migrants were a reflection of state power and an outgrowth of the imperial subject status created in the 1750s. They were also an aspect of it, as the assumptions of the biographies themselves encouraged submitting foreigner descent groups such as the Sanggok Ma to match their family traditions to the traditions desired by the court.

Anthologies Official and Unofficial

Although the creation of the category imperial subject was a court-sponsored venture during the reigns of Yeongjo and Jeongjo, not all of the participants in the production of these biographies were acting from the same motives. In particular, the Ming migrant descent groups themselves had a key role not only in asserting their status as imperial subjects but also in confirming aspects of their ancestor's biography. As a result, imperial subjects built on their improved social status to produce their own biographies and biographical anthologies which contained details which were otherwise heterogeneous to the tradition as a whole. The creation of imperial subject status and the production of biographies of imperial subjects may have been driven by the court and the ritual needs of the court, but once created the category took a life of its own.

In 1776, Jeongjo moved the Gyujanggak Library in the Changdeok Palace, and encouraged scholars, often the *seo-eol* descendants of *yangban* and concubines, to pursue scholarship under royal sponsorship. Partly in rivalry with the evidential scholarship of the Yangzi River and the Four Treasuries

project of the Qianlong court,²⁹ the Jeongjo court sent officials to collect texts—whether banned or officially-produced—from the Beijing book-market, bringing the Joseon court into tune with the most up-to-date trends in Chinese scholarship.³⁰

Just as the Joseon court organized Ming migrant descent groups into the category of imperial subject, so also it included these biographies in the official Ming loyalist history of Joseon's relationship with the Qing Dynasty, the *Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou*,³¹ edited by officials under the royal supervision of Jeongjo. This text was designed to provide evidence to posterity of Joseon's loyal service to the Ming and also of its inheritance of the Ming mantle. As a text which originated at the very core of the court's ideological program, it could only be produced through long and drawn-out negotiations between monarch and high officials about such issues as the proper reign-names to be used and the legitimacy of the Southern Ming emperors who followed the Chongzhen Emperor. Ultimately these issues also touched upon such fundamental sources of conflict as the relative status of the king and high-officials domestically, and the status of the Qing empire internationally. Perhaps because of these tensions, the book was completed after Jeongjo's death, but was never published formally (Jeong Ok-ja 1998, 129-68).

The biographies of the Ming migrants are included in the final pages of the text on *gwon* 15 from pages 183 to 198 of the Korea University edition. In contrast to the *Sources of the Acts of Imperial Subjects*, Ming migrants are most definitely not emphasized within the project. Their biographies, however, finish a long series of biographies, most of them of Joseon officials described as *baesin* 陪臣,³² especially the so-called “Three Scholars” (Kor.

29. The Four Treasuries project is surveyed by Kent Guy (1987).

30. Discussions of Gyujanggak scholarship include Han Yeong-u (2008) and Kim Mun-sik (1996).

31. As one anonymous reviewer pointed out, by Zhou the editors of this text were not referring specifically to the Zhou dynasty (ca. 1045-256 BCE) but to China as a whole, regardless of era. However, I would like to add that Zhou is meaningful here not because of its relationship to China in the sense of modern nationalism, but because the Zhou dynasty was one of the three idealized dynasties of early China and because it was closely associated with Confucius. That is to say, through Zhou the editors of the text were referring to the dynastic and Confucian tradition of China.

32. *Baesin*, which might perhaps be literally translated as “second-order officials” or “officials

Sambaksa 三學士), a term used to describe the three officials Hong Ik-han 洪翼漢 (1586-1637), O Dal-je 吳達濟 (1609-1637) and Yun Jip 尹集 (1606-1637) whose martyrdom at the hands of the Qing was celebrated by Song Si-yeol 宋時烈 (1607-1689) in his *Biographies of the Three Scholars* (Kor. *Sambaksa jeon* 三學士傳). In other words, if the Ming migrants were not considered important enough to stand on their own, they nevertheless were considered part of a tradition which included the three key figures of Korean Ming loyalism. Two works, Yi Deok-mu 李德懋 (1741-1793)'s *Noble Purpose* (Kor. *Oeroe nangnak* 磊磊落落)³³ and Seong Hae-eung 成海應 (1760-1839)'s *Biographies of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Ming* (Kor. *Hwangmyeong yumin jeon* 皇明遺民傳),³⁴ included a similar collection of biographies of Ming migrants to Joseon, but united them in their collections with biographies of Chinese Ming loyalists who had either resisted the Qing in China or fled to Southeast Asia. In both cases, Ming migrants to Joseon were linked with a broader Ming loyalist tradition, either Korean as is the case with the *Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou*, or international, as is the case with the collections by Seong Hae-eung and Yi Deok-mu. Notably, Ma Shunshang's story is included in all three texts, in a nearly identical form to the revision of Kim Yuk's biography found in the *Sources of the Acts of Imperial Subjects*.

However, as official Ming loyalism had implications beyond the court, it also passed outside of the control of the court. Descent groups in China and Korea would often manipulate and mold genealogies to improve their social status, as Michael Szonyi (2002) has shown for the lineages of Fujian, who, though often clearly of aboriginal ancestry, would claim—in a process of often transparent manipulation of their genealogical records—origin with migrants from northern China. Just as Cheon Il-si and Ban Chung-

once-removed,” refers to the officials of a king who in turn is subject to an emperor. Thus, when Joseon officials referred to themselves in relation to the Ming emperor, they described themselves as *baesin*, “officials once-removed” and not simply as officials. As Kye (2009) points out, the use of *baesin* declined considerably after the Qing conquest of China, as it was no longer considered honorable to be an official once-removed of a dynasty believed to have usurped the rightful rule of the Ming.

33. Yi Deok-mu (2000, 258: 346).

34. Seong Hae-eung (1988, 274: 430–31). Seong Hae-eung's collection of biographies is nearly identical to Yi Deok-mu's.

gyeom sought to use the limited records establishing their loyalist origins to raise their over-all social status, imperial subject descent groups continued to develop the biographical narratives of their ancestors underlying their Ming loyalist identity well after the Joseon court had conferred hagiographic biographies. For example, Wang Deok-gu 王德九 (1788-1863), an Altar of Gratitude guard and member of the Jenam Wang descent group of imperial subjects,³⁵ wrote the *Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty* (Kor. *Hwangjo yumin rok* 皇朝遺民錄), for which he received a preface written by Hwang Gi-cheon 黃基天 (1760-1821). In this text, which was published in 1818, Wang Deok-gu largely followed the material used in the *Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou* and the *Sources for the Acts of Imperial Subjects*. However, far more than was the case with those texts, he placed emphasis on the heroic actions of the Ming migrants themselves and their close personal relationship with King Hyojong.

Seemingly, Wang had access to a genealogy purporting to be that of Sanggok Ma descent group, and with it gained a noticeably different understanding of Ma Gui's descendants in Joseon from that which was provided by Kim Yuk. However, the Sanggok Ma descent group which had been uncovered by Jeongjo traced their ancestry not to Ma Shunshang but to a Ma Pengzhi. The story of Ma Pengzhi is much more exciting than that of Ma Shunshang. Wang Deok-gu, after a brief account of the military successes of Ma Gui, describes the life of Ma Pengzhi as follows:

The retired gentleman Ma Pengzhi was so shocked by the Qing pretense to imperial status that he sailed a little boat along the coast. When Beijing fell, he moved towards Huian, where he heard that the Hongguang Emperor [of the Southern Ming] had taken the throne. He set out to meet Supreme Commander Shi Kefa 史可法. Shortly afterwards Nanjing also fell. The enterprise could no longer be achieved, so he returned to Korea and stayed as a foreigner in Taeon in Chungcheong, eventually moving to Seokseong. The local *yangban* bought him a field and house for him to use as his dwelling place. He made his living by fishing every day. At times he would climb up onto a high hill and, looking west, weep [at the thought of the

35. The life of Wang Deok-gu is outlined in the “Biography of Master Changhae Wang” (Changhae Wang seonsaeng jeon 滄海王先生傳) in Wang Deok-gu (1880, fr. 3:18-24).

fallen Ming]. When he heard that other imperial subjects had come to the royal capital, he went to befriend them. In his old age he wandered over to eastern Gangwon Province across the Daegwal Ridge. Nobody knows how he died. (Wang Deok-gu 1818, fr. 9)

The description of Ma Pengzhi making a living fishing fits well with what we know of other submitting-foreigners, who were often required to pay the Board of Rites a tribute in fish. Otherwise the story seems rather truncated. It is not clear, for instance, if Wang's description of Ma Pengzhi as "returning to Joseon" is to be understood as a reference to Ma Pengzhi's return to the battlefield of famous ancestor Ma Gui (whose story was described immediately previous to the account) or if Wang is assuming that Ma Pengzhi was already in Joseon during late Chongzhen. He also makes no mention at all of Ma Shunshang (who, in later accounts, became Pengzhi's father). Wang's story of Ma Pengzhi, in contrast to Kim Yuk's rather humdrum account of Ma Shunshang quietly residing in Gwangju practicing sericulture, brings Ma directly into the very center of the Ming-Qing transition, into a vigorous, active and passionate role. By having him weep while looking west to the Ming, and by having him engage in discussion with other Ming migrants in Hanseong, Wang makes Ma Pengzhi a far better representative of Ming loyalism than was the case of Ma Shunshang as described by Kim Yuk. By doing so, Wang even anachronistically gives social reality in the seventeenth century to a bureaucratic category developed by the Joseon court during the mid-eighteenth century. Faced with the choice between the quotidian story of Ma Shunshang and the far more exiting story of Ma Pengzhi, Wang Deok-gu simply dropped the story of Ma Shunshang and restricted himself completely to the story of Ma Pengzhi.

This was the opposite approach from O Gyeong-won's *Unofficial History of the Lesser Zhonghua* (Kor. *Sohwa oesa* 小華外史). The *Unofficial History* is a mid-nineteenth century work (its first preface is dated to 1830). The authors of the prefaces are almost hagiographic in their certainty of an eventual Confucian revival beginning in the last remnant of civilization in Joseon. Such ultramontane Ming loyalism may perhaps be seen also in the odd nature of the material which O Gyeong-won includes in the biographies of Ming migrants. In the case of the account of Ma Shunshang/Pengzhi, instead of eliminating one, O Gyeong-won merges the two stories,

making Ma Pengzhi the son of Ma Shunshang. O Gyeong-won's account clarifies Wang Deok-gu's description of Ma Pengzhi "returning to Joseon" by establishing Ma Pengzhi, as the son of Ma Shunshang, departing from Joseon for Ming China during late Chongzhen to fight the rear-guard battle against the Qing until finally being forced back to Joseon (O Gyeong-won 1868, 2:278-79).

Moreover, O Gyeong-won also brought in an additional variation to the story where Ma Pengzhi is also established as an author of a text called *Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty*, which O Gyeong-won quotes via some versions of the *Sanggok Ma Genealogy* (*Massi gaseung* 麻氏家乘) to which he had access.³⁶ O Gyeong-won introduces through this text a series of figures that had been largely unrecorded in the earlier accounts. Whatever the origin of this text, it had clearly not existed for the compilers of the late-eighteenth century *Sources for the Acts of Imperial Subjects*, who had otherwise been quite willing to include genealogies in its list of sources;³⁷ nor does Wang Deok-gu refer to this text. The figures which O Gyeong-won mentions in passages supposedly quoted from Ma Pengzhi, moreover, are generally the founders of descent groups who had come to the Joseon court's attention during the reigns of Jeongjo and Sunjo, including the aforementioned Pan Tengyun and Qian Wanli, although O Gyeong-won also includes such intriguing names as Fortune-Teller Liu (柳卜術) and Chinese Wang (王唐人). Seemingly, the bureaucratic processes unleashed by the Joseon court had resulted in the discovery—or creation—of new historical sources for the biographies of Ming migrants.

Additionally, even as the text introduces these names, it also includes fantastic stories, not all of them in accord with the purposes of the Joseon state. For instance, when O Gyeong-won introduces another Ming migrant, a rather obscure figure known as Shi Jizu 石繼祖, he quotes a passage from the "Travel to the East of the Chao and Shi Descent groups" (Kor. *Jossi Seokssi dongnae gi* 潮氏石氏東來記), which he also attributes to Ma Pengzhi.

36. This text was mentioned briefly above in the previous section.

37. For instance, consider the discussion of the Nongseo Yi descent group, including both the aforementioned Li Chenglong and Li Yingren, where the compilers of the *Sources for the Acts of Imperial Subjects* make extensive reference to the Nongseo Yi Genealogy. *Hwangjoin sajeok* fr. 58-96.

Using this text, O Gyeong-won rationalizes the problem of the date of the arrival of Shi Jizu by granting Shi Jizu magical aid. Thus, in this story, O Gyeong-won describes how, after the fall of Beijing, Shi Jizu had fled to Liyin Hermitage in Liaodong, where, with the help of a mysterious Liaodongese Daoist, Grand Preceptor Daoguang, he spent six years and then, fearing disaster, fled from Liaodong to Ganggye, in Pyeongan Province. Establishing himself then in northern Gangwon Province partly through the aid of Li Yingren, Shi Jizu was also able to engage in regular interaction with Ma Pengzhi and even hold the occasional magical conversation with Grand Preceptor Daoguang (O Gyeong-won 1868, 2:281).

Of course, the stories told by both Wang Deok-gu and O Gyeong-won are all the height of improbability, even more so than the claims made to the Joseon court about Qian Wanli and Pan Tengyun by their descendants. If the attitude of Joseon officials in those cases had been to simply refer to the lack of sources and approve the application for imperial subject status, biographical publications attracted a somewhat more rigorous critique. For instance, the court historian Seong Hae-eung ([n.d.] 1988, 274:432), despite his involvement in compiling biographies of imperial subjects both for the *Collected Sources on Honoring the Zhou* and his own *Record of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Dynasty*, criticized Wang Deok-gu's text in his "Biographies of the Eight Surnames" (Kor. *Palseong jeon* 八姓傳), which is currently included in Seong Hae-eung's complete works:

Wang Fenggang's descendant Wang Deok-gu compiled an account of the affairs of the eight-surnames which varies considerably from my own account. Yet though I look through all that had been missed and all that had been over-emphasized, I am unable to distinguish the truth from the errors. I gather together the record here, to wait for later days to bring evidence.

Here Seong Hae-eung's criticism is muted, but, at the same time would seem to suggest considerable doubt on his part concerning the value of Wang's alternate narrative. This is not to say that Seong denied the historical value of the imperial subject category—indeed, in the "Biographies of the Eight Surnames" he created a list of the dwelling-places of the various Ming migrant descent groups. However, it would seem that, perhaps writing after

his retirement in 1815 from the Gyujanggak (Kim Mun-sik, 74-5), Seong Hae-eung took a much more critical approach to the subject. For instance, Seong Hae-eung began his discussion of Ma Pengzhi with the sentence “Ma Shunshang, also known as Ma Pengzhi, was a man from Dadong, and the great-grandson of Ma Gui,” with this emphasizing the inconsistency of the names used for the migrant ancestor of the descent group. He then quotes, in slightly shortened form, the accounts of both Wang Deok-gu and Kim Yuk (although he edits Wang’s account slightly by changing Ma Pengzhi’s name to Shunshang throughout). Finally, he passes judgment on Wang’s account, saying:

These two records do not agree, and my own opinion is that, after the fall of Nanjing, there would have been no road for Shunshang to take to travel to Joseon; or perhaps are we to suppose that he made the trip by sea?³⁸

Seong Hae-eung is not hostile to Wang Deok-gu’s narrative in this critique, but he is rigorous in pointing out inconsistencies between Wang Deok-gu and Kim Yuk’s narratives. Seong Hae-eung alludes to the contradiction of having two different names for the supposed ancestor of the descent group, and also to the considerable improbability of travel from China to Joseon after the fall of Nanjing in 1645, using phrasing to describe even travel by sea (the only possible route), as most unlikely. This last point of criticism, of course, must be seen as a far reaching one, as it undermines not only the biography of Ma Shunshang/Ma Pengzhi, but also that of the descendants of Li Yingren and by implication also connected accounts such as that of Pan Tengyun mentioned above.

Despite the considerable variation in the treatment of Ma Shunshang (or Pengzhi) in the anthologies described above, all are in agreement that, as a group, Ming migrants belonged together. Indeed, while the *Collected Texts on Honoring the Zhou* merely links them together as a category, Wang Deok-gu brings them together physically and dramatically by having Ma Pengzhi visit Wang’s ancestor in Hanseong. O Gyeong-won’s discussion of Ma Pengzhi, supposedly quoted from a writing of Ma Pengzhi himself, has Ma

38. “與此錄不同。竊意南都陷後。舜裳寔無東來之路。豈或從海路歟。”

Pengzhi engage in friendly discussions with Shi Jizu. Likewise, by having Ma become an author recording the lives of other Ming migrants, O Gyeong-won pushes the origin of the Ming migrant biography, and the category of imperial subject, back to the time of their actual migration. The doubtful historicity of Ma Pengzhi and the rather incredible nature of the story of Shi Jizu aside, both Wang Deok-gu's and O Gyeong-won's accounts should be seen as attempts to anachronistically read the category of imperial subject into the mid-seventeenth century, treating Ming migrants scattered about the countryside as if they were already one unified community at that time.

Conclusion

The unleashing of the bureaucratic process during the eighteenth century in Joseon to reclassify Ming migrant descent groups was based on a certain idea of the biography of a Ming migrant who was at once loyal to the Ming Empire, hostile to the Qing Empire and in agreement with then court-sponsored Ming loyalist ideology. Thus, biographical information was sought out to uncover such migrants and their descendants, and to allow them to participate in court-sponsored Ming loyalist rituals. At the same time, the Joseon state sought out the descendants of Ming migrants, such as the descendants of Ma Shunshang, who were only known from brief records in official and unofficial documents. Thus both the Joseon court and the descent groups themselves participated in the construction and development of new biographies for the original Ming migrants which placed the Ming migrants precisely within the categories of Ming loyalist and imperial subject. The biographies of Ming migrants were the products of the original biographical fragments which attested their presence in the very different social and ideological context of the early seventeenth century, the bureaucratic processes which produced the imperial subject category, and the status aspirations of the imperial subject descent groups. All these processes remain visible in the surviving biographies of Ma Shunshang.

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Abstract

This paper investigates the construction of biographies of Ming migrant descent groups during the Late Joseon as a product of the interaction of diverse social and political forces. With a focus especially on the biographies of one migrant—those of Ma Shunshang or Pengzhi, the founder of the Sanggok Ma descent group—this paper argues that the biographies were created by the interaction of the Joseon court and the Ming migrant descent groups themselves. Ming refugees to Joseon had been of little interest to the Joseon court at the actual time of their migration. However, during the mid-eighteenth century, ideological changes within the Joseon court resulted in the descendants of Ming migrants being reclassified as exemplars of Ming loyalism. This in turn resulted in the creation of hagiographic biographies of the original migrants. For the Joseon court, the presence in Joseon of the descendants of Ming loyalists with appropriate backgrounds was vital for official Ming loyalist ideology, while for the descendants of Ming migrants the claim to be remnant subjects of the Ming was a strategy for raising their social status. All of these elements leave traces within the text of the biographies themselves.

Keywords: Altar of Gratitude, Ming loyalism, Biography, Joseon Korea, Migration

