

Factionalism in Chosŏn Korea

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Confucian Advice

- What sort of advice did Tasan give his sons? (see Sources, p. 55-56)
- How did Yi Tǒngmu think scholars should behave? (see p. 63)
- How did he think women should behave?(p.66)
- What are the duties of a yangban wife? (p. 68-69)

Changes in the status of Women

- Lost right to lead rituals, and therefore lost most of the inheritance rights.
- Upper-class women had to stay home, or cover themselves completely if they went out.
- Had to live with in-laws, and accept concubines. (Marriage became patrilocal)
- Kisaeng had more autonomy, and more education.

Consequences of Confucianization

- More patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal
- gap between those literate in Classical Chinese and those who were not. Merchants and commerce undervalued, as was the military.
- Korean Identity- proud of being part of Sinitic civilization, yet aware of distinctiveness
- Buddhism and shamanism marginalized. Government claimed ritual hegemony.
- Confucian moral rhetoric dominated political debates, giving officials rhetorical weapons to limit royal authority.

Factionalism

- 1575 Split into Easterners and Westerners over control of appointment recommendations
- 1591 Easterners split into Northerners and Southerners (Namin) over succession dispute
- 1659-- Major dispute over how long the Queen Mother should mourn King Hyojong (r. 1649-1659), since he was her stepson, and besides the Queen Mother had already mourned 3 years for his elder brother.
- 1674 --Dispute over how long the Queen Mother should mourn King Hyojong's widow.
- 1680 --Westerners split into Old Doctrine (noron) and Young Doctrine (soron) over how to treat the Namin.
- 1762-- death of the Crown Prince (Sado seja) led to two new factions, the Pyökp'a (Intransigent faction) and the Sip'a (Flexible faction)

Features of Korean Factionalism

- Hereditary---men usually stayed in the faction their father and grandfathers were members of.
- Factional battles were often, but not always, waged over issues of ritual propriety.
- Factionalism was justified with Confucian rhetoric that proclaimed that there was only one moral position, and only the selfish would disagree with that position.
- Four major Factions: Noron (Old Doctrine or Patriarchs), Soron (Young Doctrine or Disciples), Namin (Southerners), and Pugin (Northerners).
- After 1762 the Flexible faction tended to be associated with the Namin, and the Intransigent faction with the Noron.

Factionalism in the Sources

- Chapter 20 Politics:
- What was Yi Ik's explanation for factionalism?
- Did Yu Suwŏn agree? (What is the censorate?)
- What did Pak Chega think was wrong with the civil service exams?
- What did Tasan propose as the reason for Korea's political troubles?
- Was Tasan a closet democrat? (as seen in "roots of royal authority")
- Why did Yi Chunghwan advise staying away from yangban villages?
- How did King Yŏngjo and his minister disagree on how to deal with factional disputes? Why do you think they had different opinions?

Reasons for Factionalism

- importance of ritual in Neo-Confucian Korea
- imbalance between number of government posts and number of applicants
- personal loyalty and filial piety
- private schools (sŏwŏn) trained potential scholar-officials along partisan lines
- political issues are moral issues in Confucianism.

Philosophy and Factions

- the 4-7 debate over the relationship of the four fonts of virtue and the seven emotions to li and ki.
- Yi T'oegye argued the li generated the four fonts (virtuous instincts), and ki generated the emotions. His distrust of the real world led to righteous withdrawal.
- Yi Yulgok argued that both the four fonts and the seven emotions are generated by ki, with li providing direction. Encouraged an active role in government.
- The Namin looked to T'oegye for philosophical guidance.
- The Noron looked to Yulgok.

Benevolent authoritarianism

- The government was truly centralized. **It was not a feudal government.**
- The main task of the government was to maintain order. It was not expected to improve the lives of the people, or to provide them with education or health care.
- But, to be legitimate, it had to provide peace and prosperity, it could not be overly corrupt, and it had to be acceptable in Chinese eyes.
- A Confucian government, at least in theory, was less predatory than other pre-modern governments tended to be. But it was not a modern government. It did not try to represent those it governed or respond to their wishes, to grow the economy, or to improve the standard of living of the people it governed. It was supposed to maintain a floor below which the people's living standards would not fall, but it was not expected to raise that floor.

Power of the Yangban

- Two kings were overthrown and replaced by half-brothers:
- Yŏnsan'gun r. 1494-1506
- tyrant who didn't respect Confucian officials and institutions
- and Kwanghaegun r. 1608-1623
- Seen as not loyal enough to Ming China. Also he was the son of a royal concubine, and killed his younger half-brother, a son of the queen.

Chosŏn and its neighbours

- A sino-centric world order in which Korea was a model tributary state.
- tribute missions were a way to conduct trade.
- Ming China sent aid to Korea when Korea was attacked by Japan in the 1590s
- Korea was not allowed to have diplomatic relations with any other country.

Korea and the Manchu

- Before the Manchu conquered China, they first attacked Korea, in 1627 and 1236. Korea lost and was forced to pledge allegiance to the new Qing dynasty. It became a loyal tributary subject.
- Korea continued to honour the Ming even after the Ming had fallen to the Qing in 1644.
- in 1712 Korea and the Qing agreed on a boundary marker on Mt. Paektu/Changbai

Korea and Japan

- Korea did not have regular diplomatic relations with Japan before 1600. However, there was some trade as well as raids by Wa pirates.
- The Hideyoshi invasions of the 1590s dramatically changed Korean-Japanese relations.
- Most of the time, Korea wanted neighbourly relations with Japan, while it “served the great” (China).

The Hideyoshi Invasions

- 1592- 150,000 Japanese land in Pusan, the king flees to the north
- Ming forces on land and Yi Sunsin's "turtle boats" at sea harass the Japanese, as do righteous armies.
- The King returns to Seoul in 1593
- Fighting breaks out again in 1597
- The Japanese retreat when Hideyoshi dies in 1598
- what was the impact of the war on Korea?
- decreased tax revenues, some change in the social structure.

Korean and Japan after 1600

- Korea restored the relationship with Tsushima that treated Tsushima as a tributary of Korea, and allowed a small Japanese presence on the Southeast coast.
- Korea sent embassies to Japan (Japan called them “tribute missions”) but did not allow Japan to send embassies to Korea.

Korea and Okinawa

- In the first half of the dynasty, the Kingdom of the Ryūkyūs engaged in trade with Korea under the guise of diplomacy.
- After 1437 that contact was via Japan.
- Was Korea an independent actor in the international arena? Yes and no.