

# The Shape of the Cosmopolis: Korea and East Asia in Late Imperial Chinese Vernacular Literary Imagination

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1421

The History of Chinese Character

- Early forms and variations
  - ⦿ Hānzi - Clerical script †
  - ⦿ Hānzi - Regular script ■
  - ⦿ Zetian characters †
- Adaptations
  - ⦿ Hanja (Korean) ■
  - ⦿ Kanji - Kyūjitai (Japanese) ■
  - ⦿ Ch'ŭ Nôm (Vietnamese) ■
- Derivations:
  - ⦿ Sawndip (Zhuang) ■
  - ⦿ Gugyeol (Korean) ■
  - ⦿ Balhae script? †
  - ⦿ Kana (Japanese) ■
  - ⦿ Khitan large script †
  - ⦿ Khitan small script †
  - ⦿ Nūshu (Tuhua) ■
  - ⦿ Tangut script ■
  - ⦿ Jurchen script ■

Tang administration 律令制

Mahayana Buddhism 大乘佛教

Confucianism 儒教

Sinosphere 漢字文化圈

禮儀之邦 "Land of ritual"

文獻之邦 "Land of manifest civility"

文/禮 transcending difference and hierarchy

# Sinographic Cosmopolis?



# Cosmopolis vs. Vernacular?

Classical Chinese (Literary Sinitic) ~ Latin?

LANGUAGE ≠ SCRIPT ≠ WRITING ≠ SPEECH

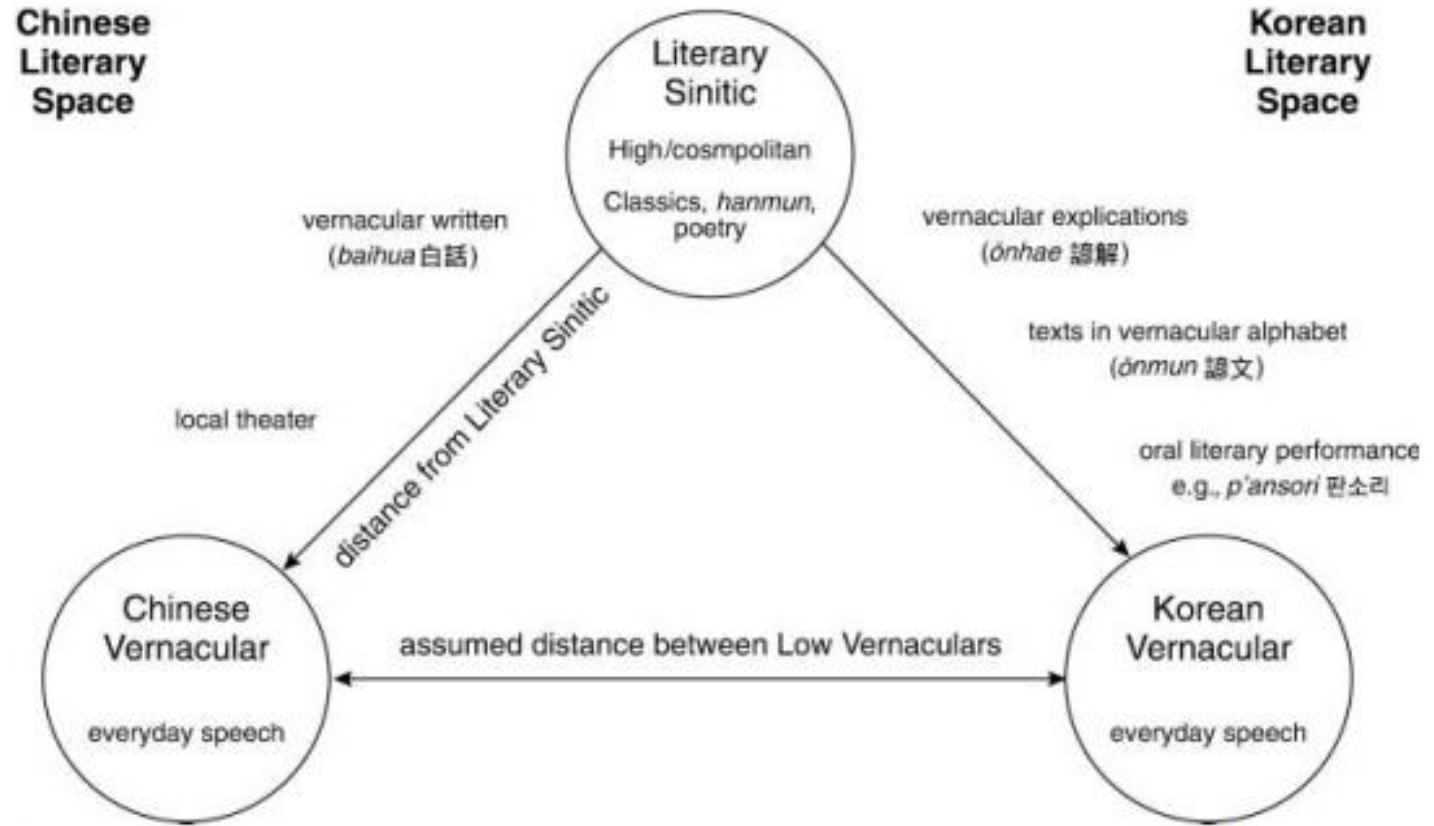
Vernacular ≠ Spoken

Diglossic model:

Vernacular <---> Cosmopolis?



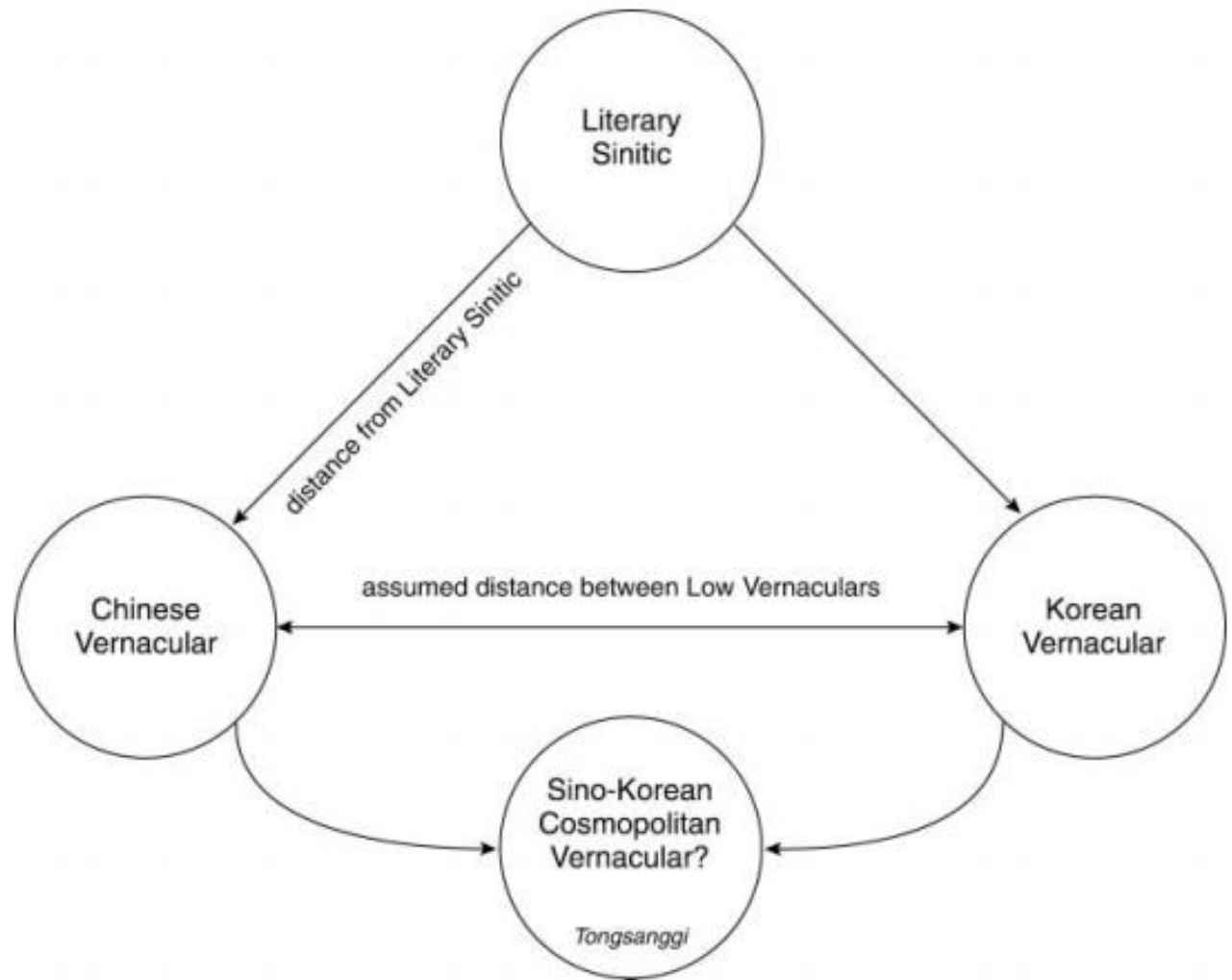
# Diglossic Model



**Figure 1.** Diglossic model: distance between Korean and Chinese Vernaculars mediated by literary Sinitic

Wang, Sixiang. "Story of the Eastern Chamber: Dilemmas of Vernacular Language and Political Authority in Eighteenth-Century Chosŏn." *Journal of Korean Studies* 24, no. 1 (March 1, 2019): 29-62. <https://doi.org/10.1215/21581665-7258042>.

# Vernacular as Cosmopolitan



**Figure 2.** *Tongsanggi* collapses the distance between Chinese and Korean vernaculars.

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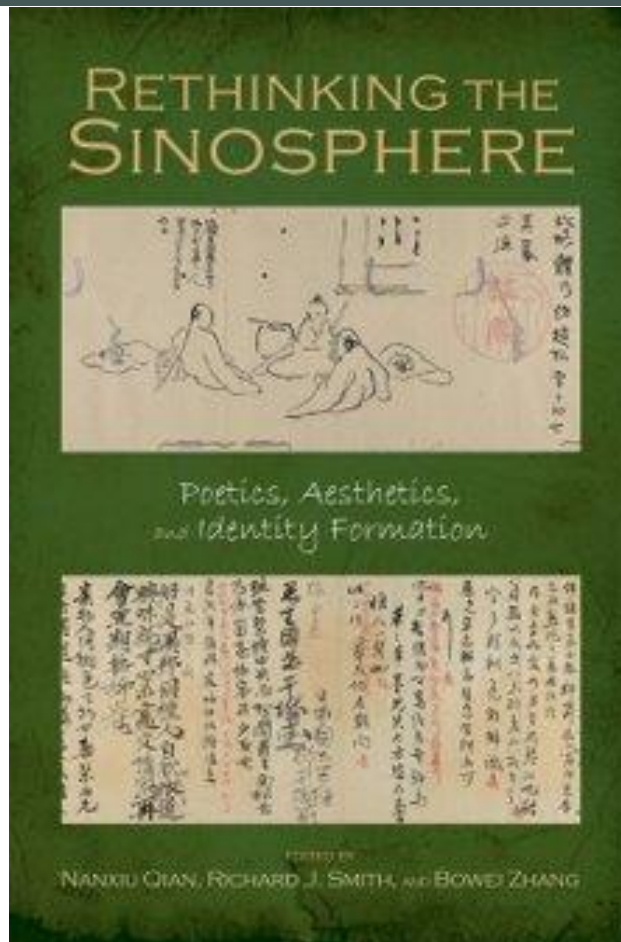
# Vernaculars and the Shape of the Cosmopolis

Vernacular texts allows to get to see the "shape of the cosmopolis more clearly"; a productive tension between different contested imaginaries

1. What do I mean by "shape of the cosmopolis"
2. A brief discussion of China and the Cosmopolis in Korean Vernacular texts
3. A lengthier discussion of Korea in VERNACULAR Chinese texts
  - a. *The Complete Story of Romance Reappeared* (*Zaishengyuan quanzhuan* 再生緣全傳)
  - b. *Water Margin, Continued* (*Shuihu houzhuan* 水滸後傳)
  - c. *Legend of the Heroes of Great Ming* (*Da Ming yinglie zhuan* 大明英烈傳)



# 1. The Shape of the Cosmopolis



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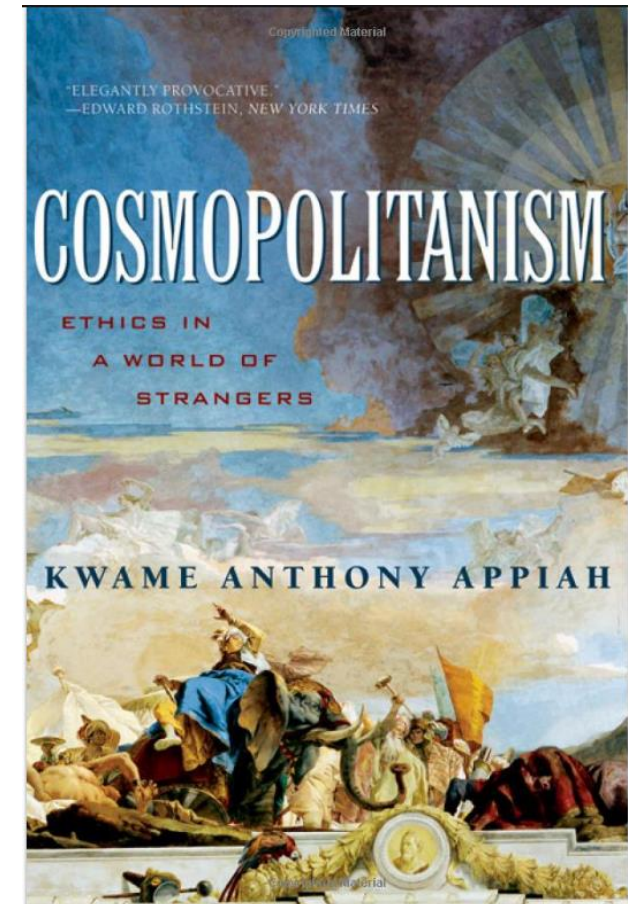
## Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History

Sheldon Pollock

Few things seem to us as natural as the multiplicity of vernacular languages that different peoples use for making sense of life through texts, that is, for making literature. And few things seem as unnatural as their abandonment and gradual disappearance in the present. In fact, literary language loss is often viewed as part of a more general reduction of cultural diversity, one considered as dangerous as the reduction of biological diversity to which it is often compared. The homogenization of culture today, of which language loss is one aspect, seems without precedent in human history, at least for the scope, speed, and manner in which changes are taking place.

This commonsense view of the world needs two important qualifications. First, the vernacular ways of being that we see vanishing everywhere were themselves created over time. These are not primeval ways of autochthons, for autochthons (like the Spartoi of Thebes, "the sown people" born from the dragon teeth planted by Cadmus) do not exist outside their own mythical self-representation. Second, by the very fact of their creation, the new vernaculars replaced a range of much older cultural practices. These earlier practices, which seemed to belong to everywhere in general and nowhere in particular, affiliated their users to a larger world rather than a smaller place. They were, in a sense to be argued out in

I am grateful to Benedict Anderson for his meticulous and constructively contentious reading of the essay. Homi Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Caitrin Lynch, and Mica Pollock helped me sharpen a number of the arguments and bear no responsibility for those that have remained dull.



Not just  
cosmopolis....

Three Modes?

- Cosmopolitan
- Empire
- Ecumene



# Empire

Tributary System

Chinese [?] World Order

Universal Empire

Image: "A Myriad States Come to Court" 萬國來朝圖, Qianlong period (Qing 18th century)  
Beijing Palace Museum Collection

297 x 206.5 cm (Silk)





# Ecumene

Greek *oikoumene* (οἰκουμένη): "known world" / "habitable world"

Chinese *tianxia* 天下  
civilized vs. barbarian (hwa-I 華夷 discourse)

Image: Chōnha cheguk to 天下諸國

圖 Early Eighteenth century Korean map of the world (detail). Fonds Maurice Courant, Collège de France. Institut d'Etudes coréennes.



# Cosmopolis/ Empire / Ecumene

- How do these three modes of interacting intersect in specific situations?
- What "shape" does this intersection produce?



# II: Korea and the Vernacular Cosmopolis

Boudewijn Walraven

## Divine Territory

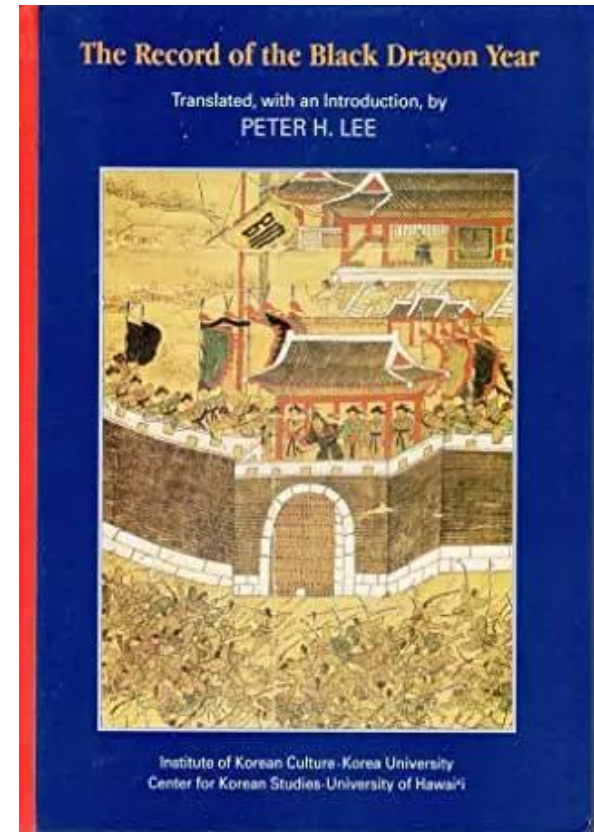
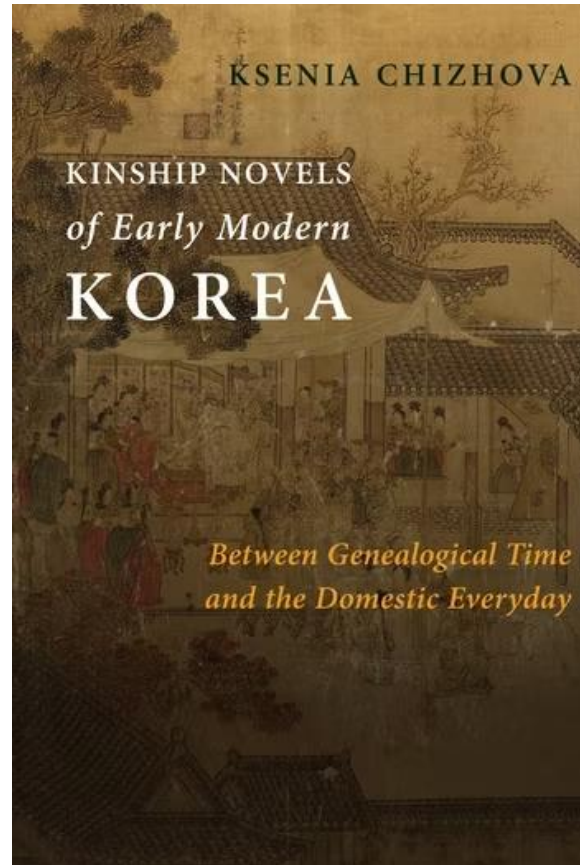
SHAMAN SONGS, ELITE CULTURE AND THE NATION

*The Kunung [deities] all assemble:  
Spurning the examinations in horsemanship  
they go to take the literary examinations!  
Clutching their books against their chests,  
They hasten to Hanyang, the capital.*

(From a shaman song<sup>1</sup>)

How deeply rooted is the contemporary sense of nationhood in Korea? Is it an entirely modern phenomenon, or have more recent articulations and imaginings of the nation been grafted onto older visions of a community that could potentially unite the people of states such as Koryŏ or Chosŏn? If such visions existed (which, as John Duncan has suggested, is quite likely<sup>2</sup>), to what extent did they permeate society? Were they exclusively elitist, or shared by other layers of the population, and if so, which layers? This article aims to demonstrate that the songs sung by Chosŏn-period shamans deserve to be considered as sources that suggest answers to these questions.

At first glance this enterprise may seem unlikely to succeed. What role could the oral songs of shamans play



# Example of *Tale of Ch'oe Chŏk*

Cho Wihan, *Tale of Ch'oe Chŏk* (ca. 1640)

Not written in *vernacular register* BUT, reflects *vernacular* imagination of "Cosmopolis"

- Reflecting maritime contacts with broader East Asia
- Literary Sinitic as medium of conversation and exchange
- Use of Buddhist tropes as political allegory

# III. Korea in the Chinese Vernacular Imagination

Texts in the Vernacular 俗 register

Tension between cosmopolis, empire, and ecumene

Three texts/ Three themes

- a. Korea as an imperial rival in *Complete Story of Romance Reappeared* (Zaishengyuan quan zhuan 再生緣全傳) ca. 18th century
- b. Tension between empire and ecumene in *Water Margin, Continued* (Shuihu houzhuan 水滸後傳)
- c. Tension between empire and cosmopolis in *Legend of the Heroes of Great Ming* (Da Ming yinglie zhuan 大明英烈傳)



# a. Korea as Potential Imperial Rival in 再生緣

Author: Chen Duansheng 陳端生 (1751-1796), female libretto writer

Story: Huangfu Shaohua, friend of the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1260-1368) crown prince leads the imperial army against the King of Chosŏn (1392-1910), who invades China



# Basis?

Appearance of similar tropes in other stories/media

- *Xue Rengui Campaigns East* stories: Korea conflated with Liao
- Peking Opera: 三江越虎城: Koguryō conflated with Liao
- Early Ming legend of Puzhen 濮真

Refraction of Koguryō-Tang wars/ Song-Liao Wars, transposed in historical fantasy settings



# b. empire and ecumene in *Water Margin, Continued* 水滸後傳

ca. 17th century; Author: Chen Chen 陳忱 (1615-1670), Ming Loyalist author

Li Jun 李俊, *Water Margin* character, new King of Siam

Li Yu (Yi U) 李儼, King of Koryŏ, based on Wang U 王儼, King Yejong r. 1105-1122) of Koryŏ 高麗

"Li Yu and Li Jun are of the same surname, their two countries neighbors; they now join together as brothers to serve loyally the Celestial Court [the Song], to comfort and shepherd the myriad surnames.... Whosoever should betray or violate these vows shall be ejected by heaven."

李儼，李俊忝為同姓，二國相鄰，結為兄弟。盡忠天朝，撫牧萬姓。若有外侮，並力捍禦；倘生內亂，亟為剿除。吉凶聘問，災豐相恤。自盟之後，永以為好。若有背違，天必厭之。



# Japan and Korea in *The Water Margin* *continued*

## Japan

"Loves poetry, calligraphy and antiquities, but also greedy, deceitful and murderous"

好詩書古玩 卻貪詐好殺

- Mention of "Kampaku": clear reference to Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Imjin War

## Korea

"... where the [Sage Ruler] Kija established his kingdom; where the brilliance of civilization, rites and music, had flourished since the Han and Tang, ministered by generations of great statesmen"

箕子開基，文明禮樂，自漢唐以來，世多碩輔

# c. empire and cosmopolis in *Heroes of Great Ming* 大明英烈傳

ca. 16th century, *yanyi* style novel  
depicting founding of Ming

Scene in chapter 72, arrival of  
Korean [?] envoy Halimaha 嚙哩嘛哈,  
who writes a poem to the emperor

"Our country is like a country of the central plains;  
Our people like those of antiquity.  
The clothes and caps follow Tang regulations;  
Ritual and music match those of the Han's rulers and  
officials.  
In vats of silver we store new wine;  
With knives of gold we slice brocade scales.  
Every year in the second and third months,  
The peach and plums bloom in the same spring."

國比中原國，人同上古人。  
衣冠唐制度，禮樂漢君臣。  
銀瓮儲新酒，金刀鱠錦鱗。  
年年二三月，桃李一般春。

# alternate versions

v.1:

- Halimaha is Korean
- Emperor rewards envoy
- Emperor says: "Do not that foreign lands do not produce men of talent! Just this one poem, we can sense that they are worthy of being heard."

v.2:

- Halimaha is Japanese
- Emperor punishes envoy for arrogance
- Ming official says: "from this poem we can tell that distance from us makes the Japanese caitiffs arrogant, it is therefore clear that we cannot treat them with the rites accorded the various vassals such as Korea; even if we allow them to communicate with us in tribute, we must watch them carefully to prevent any incident"

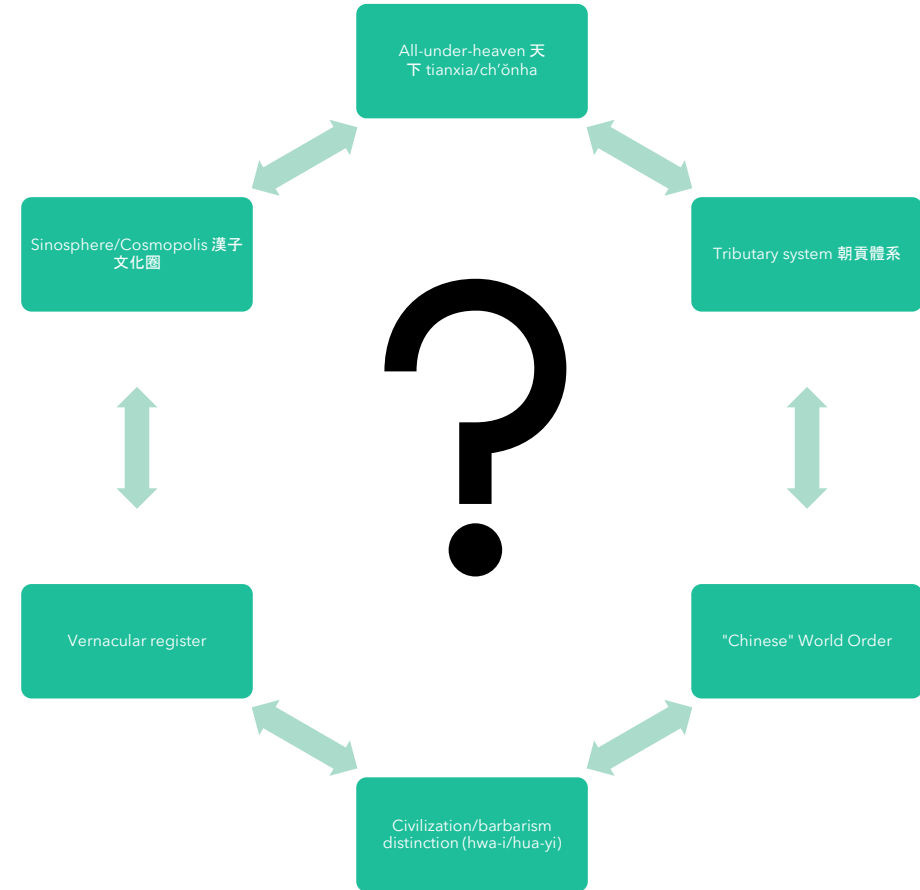


# conclusion

What do we mean by the "shape of the cosmopolis?"



- All-under-heaven 天下 tianxia/ch'õnha
- The Tributary system 朝貢體系
- "Chinese" World Order
- Civilization/barbarism distinction (hwa-i/hua-yi)
- Sinosphere/Cosmopolis 漢子文化圈
- Vernacular register



To interrogate the above and be specific about their interactions



七、獻辭

1993年畢業資料



# *Boundless Winds of Empire*, Columbia University Press

## BOUNDLESS WINDS OF EMPIRE



RHETORIC AND RITUAL  
IN EARLY CHOSŎN DIPLOMACY  
WITH MING CHINA

SIXIANG WANG

### Boundless Winds of Empire

Rhetoric and Ritual in Early Chosŏn Diplomacy with Ming China

Sixiang Wang

Columbia University Press

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For more than two hundred years after its establishment in 1392, the Chosŏn dynasty of Korea enjoyed generally peaceful and stable relations with neighboring Ming China, which dwarfed it in size, population, and power. This remarkably long period of sustained peace was not an inevitable consequence of Chinese cultural and political ascendancy. In this book, Sixiang Wang demonstrates how Chosŏn political actors strategically deployed cultural practices, values, and narratives to carve out a place for Korea within the Ming imperial order.

*Boundless Winds of Empire* is a cultural history of diplomacy that traces Chosŏn's rhetorical and ritual engagement with China. Chosŏn drew on classical Chinese paradigms of statecraft, political legitimacy, and cultural achievement. It also paid regular tribute to the Ming court, where its envoys composed paeans to Ming imperial glory. Wang argues these acts

