

CHOSŎN PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORLD AS REFLECTED IN THE KOREAN-BRITISH TREATY OF 1882

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In June 1832, the British merchant ship the *Lord Amherst* sailed into Kodaedo, Hongju-mok in Chungchŏng province and proceeded to ride at anchor for twenty days as it waited for government officials to forward its letter to the King demanding the conclusion of a commercial treaty and an agreement on the fair treatment of shipwrecked sailors.¹ It was in 1832, the same year the *Lord Amherst* demanded the opening of Chosŏn, that the British government abolished the East India Company's monopoly over trade with China and started to pursue actively the opening of the Chinese market. Britain quickly let it be known that when it came to the opening of markets in East Asia, not only China and Japan, but Chosŏn as well would also be pressured to open up. As such, Western demands that Korea open its domestic market ostensibly started at the same time as pressure began to be put on China and Japan to do the same: in the middle of the 19th century.

Although Western pressure to open the Chosŏn market began approximately at the same time as efforts to open neighbouring countries, the results in Korea proved to be quite different from those that occurred in China and Japan. The First Opium War between China and Britain led to the conclusion of the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. Japan was similarly forced through gunboat diplomacy to conclude the Kanagawa Treaty of 1854, following the arrival of Commodore Perry of the United States (US) and his "black ships" off their shores. These two treaties marked the official opening of China's and Japan's markets to the outside world. Chosŏn was also attacked when the French Far Eastern Fleet stormed Kanghwa island in 1866 and again in 1871 when a mini-war broke out with the US. While the modern armed forces of France and the US caused serious damage to Chosŏn and its people, the Chosŏn government steadfastly refused to give in to their demands. In the end, French and American efforts to open up Korea came to naught.

To this day one can find a large number of so-called *ch'ōkhwabi* monuments (stone tablets carved at the instruction of the Taewōn'gun) spread throughout the nation. On each of these *ch'ōkhwabi* the following inscription can be found: "Failure to fight against the invasion of Western barbarians is to advocate appeasement, and to advocate appeasement is to betray the nation". To strengthen the people's willingness to resist foreign encroachment, the following was also included at the bottom of these tablets: "prepared in the year of Pyōngin (1866) and erected in the year of *Sinmi* (1871)".

France's attack on Kanghwa island in 1866 came as a form of retaliation for Korea's execution of Catholic missionaries. For its part, the US attack on Kanghwa island was designed to force Korea to pay restitution for its destruction five years before of the *General Sherman* (the US-owned steamship burnt on the Taedong river in 1866). France mobilised seven warships and 1,500 soldiers for its operation on Kanghwa island and proceeded to occupy Kanghwa for one month. During that period they plundered cultural treasures and properties, including 340 volumes from the Outer Royal Archive and 19 chests of silver bullion containing the equivalent of 197,231 francs. Meanwhile, the US mobilised five naval ships (three coastguard vessels and two gunboats), 85 pieces of artillery and 1,230 marines for its fact-finding mission concerning the fate of the *General Sherman*, the largest mobilisation of military power since the Civil War. The US forces landed on Kanghwa island after having destroyed the Chosŏn military. According to a report published by the US, this battle resulted in three American casualties and in more than 350 for the Chosŏn forces. However, despite the inordinate amount of damage caused by the powerful French and American forces, the Chosŏn government was steadfast in resisting their demands, an outcome that surprised even the French and American soldiers. Immediately after the conclusion of these wars with the Western powers, the Korean ruler issued his proclamation of the government's refusal to open the country, which was enshrined in the above-mentioned stone tablets.

Where did Chosŏn's strong refusal to open the country even after having been violently attacked by France and the US come from? Chosŏn's military power was much weaker than that of China or Japan during this period. For both Chosŏn intellectuals and commoners, perception of the world was based of the notion of self-cultivation, which in turn was founded on the quest to discover the nature of humanity and to live a life that was based on righteous human conduct. As such, Chosŏn people believed that those who abided by the five virtues—benevolence, loyalty, propriety, wisdom and trust—and the five moral principles (*oryun*) were true humans. Therefore, for Koreans, the Western countries, who used their military power to kill innocent people, plundered properties and even damaged ancestors' graves, were sub-humans who were not even worthy of the appellation of barbarian. Chosŏn's refusal to open its doors to the Western world has its origins in these perceptions.

The task of bringing Chosŏn, which had strongly resisted Western demands to open the country, into the capitalist world order, fell indirectly into the hands of Japan. However, Chosŏn continued to show different patterns even after joining the capitalist market system. While China and Japan proceeded to open their markets immediately and sign treaties with other Western powers following their opening to the outside world, Chosŏn continued fixedly to refuse to yield. It took six years from the signing of the Kanhwa Treaty of 1876 before Chosŏn finally ceded to the Western powers, a process which only began in earnest in the aftermath of the conclusion of treaties with the US and Britain in 1882.

As such, it was only half a century after the *Lord Amherst* had first appeared off the shores of Korea that a treaty with Britain was finally signed. However, the Korean-British Treaty concluded in April 1882 proved to be a provisional one. The conclusion of treaties with the US and Britain resulted in further fanning of the flames of the resistance orchestrated by the conservative faction opposed to the government's policy of opening up, and eventually led to a temporary change in the political power structure. As the British merchants active in East Asia vehemently objected to the treaty's provisions dealing with tariff rates, the Korean-British Treaty of 1882 was quietly abandoned without ever being ratified. The provisions for a new Korean-British Treaty began to be negotiated in the aftermath of the Chinese military intervention in Korea, which restored the original framework of power. Final agreement was reached in October 1883. The new Korean-British Treaty of 1883 came into effect after having been ratified by both countries and became the model on which the Chosŏn government based its treaties with other Western powers.

This paper analyses the conflicting nature and characteristics of the *yangban* intellectuals' perceptions of the international scene from 1880, when the Chosŏn government actively began to pursue an opening policy toward the West, until 1882, when the first Korean-British Treaty was concluded.²

Japan's role

As mentioned above, Chosŏn's inclusion in the Western capitalist order was indirectly brought about by Japan, not directly by Western powers such as the US or Britain. The Korean-Japanese Treaty, or as it is more commonly known, the Kanhwa Treaty, was signed on 6 February 1876. The treaty was the result of seven years of negotiations between the two countries, which had as their goal the restoring of diplomatic ties in the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration. While Japan sought to restore diplomatic relations with Chosŏn right after the establishment of the Meiji government in 1868, Chosŏn consistently refused throughout those years to accept the diplomatic credentials submitted by Japan. The Korean refusal was made on the

basis that these credentials were different from the ones traditionally used to govern relations between the two neighbours.

In 1875, by which point diplomatic negotiations had broken down, Japan decided to use the same method of getting Korea to yield which the US had employed on them. It chose to use gunboat diplomacy to get Chosŏn to open its doors. Japan's forced opening of Chosŏn came at a time when the political currents were changing within the Meiji regime itself. This process of opening Korea by force began in earnest in 1873 following an uprising by the so-called Conquer Korea faction, which advocated the notion of *Seikan ron* (military conquest of Korea).

In January 1876, Japan dispatched an envoy to confront Chosŏn about what Japan argued were its military provocations. As their own envoy, the Chosŏn government sent Sin Hŏn, the general who had fended off the two previous Western attempts to encroach on Korea's sovereignty. However, the Japanese demand that Chosŏn sign a treaty to open its ports caught the government completely off guard. This Japanese demand, backed by military force, resulted in the advent of a nationwide opposition movement to the signing of such a treaty. The Taewŏn'gun and his supporters had set about mobilising public opinion against the opening-up policy from the moment King Kojong first announced that he was actively considering the adoption of such a policy during a meeting of the legislative assembly. However, the most influential person in the formation of public opinion and the most vehement opponent of the government's decision to follow this course proved to be Ch'oe Ikhyŏn. Three years earlier, Ch'oe had provided King Kojong with the opportunity to restore his authority, but now he criticised Kojong's policy of establishing diplomatic relations with Japan. In a petition to the King, Ch'oe made his opposition to the opening policy clear:

If we view the issues before us from the standpoint of the Cheng-Zhu school of Confucian thought, then there are five reasons why we will be faced with an unforgettable calamity if we sign a treaty with the enemy ... If we simply grant their demands without making the necessary preparations to oppose them, then how will we satisfy their endless greed in the future? This is the first reason why we will be faced with a calamity. The enemy is awash with luxurious and strange things. Our people are hard-pressed to make ends meet. The whole country will go bankrupt within a few years if people are allowed to indulge in such luxuries. This is the second reason why a calamity will befall us if we go through with this. Although the enemy appears to be *waein* [Japanese], these are in reality Western barbarians. If we establish relations with these barbarians, heretical schools of thought will spread throughout the nation. This is the third reason we must oppose this treaty. If we allow them in because we do not have any reason to refuse them, these barbarians will rape our people and plunder our treasures. This is the fourth reason ... These barbarians are only interested in fortune and women. As they do not have any perception of humanity, they are considered to be beasts. I do not understand why we must form relations with such beasts. This is the fifth reason ... Your Majesty, you said, "since I have stated that those who have come over this time are Japanese and not

Westerners, what is so harmful about adhering to tradition?” In my opinion, there are several reasons why we should not perceive them as simple Japanese ... These Japanese came in a Western-style ship, wearing Western-style clothes and hats. This proves that they are the same as the Western barbarians ... The day we make relations with Japan will be the day that we become friends with the Western barbarians.³

During this period in which King Kojong and his government were debating the opening up of the country, Ch'oe Ikhyŏn listed these five reasons why such a policy should not be adopted. His objections were in large part based on the notion of the *waeyang ilch'eron* (barbarians as savage as the Westerners). In a memorial to the king, Ch'oe directly criticised King Kojong's justification for implementing an opening policy, asking, “Didn't you say, ‘since I have stated that those who have come over this time are Japanese and not Westerners, what is so harmful about adhering to tradition?’” King Kojong responded to Ch'oe Ikhyŏn's criticism by clarifying his position and ordering that Ch'oe be exiled to Hŭksando:

Restraining the Japanese is restraining the Japanese. Rejecting Westerners is rejecting Westerners. How can we know for certain that the Japanese boat that came this time was in collusion with the Westerners? Even if the Japanese are scouts for the Westerners, we can take necessary steps as the situation demands.⁴

King Kojong justified his own stance on the basis that Westerners were Westerners and the Japanese were Japanese. As such, Kojong refused to accept this notion of *waeyang ilch'eron*. Basing itself on advice from China, and its own belief that it was better at this point to avoid military conflicts in order to forestall the occurrence of more outrageous demands such as those that had been made in the aftermath of the *Unyŏ* incident (when a Japanese naval vessel approached Kanghwa island in 1875 and was fired upon), the Chosŏn government forged ahead and concluded the Kanghwa Treaty of 1876. The most important issues which emerged for the Chosŏn government in the aftermath of the signing of this treaty were to find ways of lessening the resistance of those opposed to the opening policy, and to craft measures to respond to the changes in Korea's international situation which had been wrought by the signing of the treaty. However, the biggest problem for the Chosŏn government proved to be the relentless attacks of those opposed to the opening policy.

As this criticism of the Kanghwa Treaty, which had been concluded under duress from the Japanese military, transformed itself into a more general political attack on government officials, King Kojong increasingly felt the need to justify the treaty. He argued that “this treaty is nothing more than the simple reestablishment of relations between our two countries. As the actions taken by my loyal subjects were natural, the treaty was easily concluded.” Unlike the notion of *waeyang ilch'eron* advanced by Ch'oe Ikhyŏn, King Kojong's and the political forces' understanding of opening was one that separated Japan from the Western powers. As such, they saw the signing of

a treaty with Japan as the simple restoration and extension of traditional ties between the two countries, a perception that in essence did not mesh with the actual provisions of the treaty which resulted in opening the country to the capitalist world.

Aftermath of the Kanghwa Treaty

The actual signing of the Kanghwa Treaty based on this notion of *waeyang pulliron* (separation of Japan and Western barbarians) did not result in quelling the spread of the opposition to the opening policy. The first *Susinsa* (special diplomatic envoy), whose objective it was to learn about the political situation in Japan, was dispatched to the island nation a mere two months after the signing of the treaty. However, it would take another four years, to 1880 to be exact, before the second *Susinsa* would be sent. In December 1880, the Chosŏn government completed its reorganisation of the central government system, brought about as a result of the opening of the country, by establishing the *T'ongni kimu amun* (Office for the management of state affairs). In January 1881, the Chosŏn government decided to dispatch the Korean Courtiers' Observation Mission to Japan with the goal of laying the groundwork for the establishment of Korea's own reform policy. China also decided to send an observation mission to Japan. 1881 was the year in which the reform policy that the Chosŏn government hoped to bring about began to be publicised to the general public. It was during this period as well that the activities of those opposed to the opening policy reached their zenith.

The activities of the *Susinsa* who travelled to Japan in 1880, and more particularly those of Kim Hongjip, can be seen as having introduced several important issues related to the opening policy adopted by the Chosŏn government after the Kanghwa Treaty. In particular, the second *Susinsa*, through exchanges with Ho Ju-chang (He Ruzhang) and Huang Tsun-hsien (Huang Zunxian) of the Chinese Legation in Japan, helped to establish the foundation for the new assessment of the international situation that would eventually emerge within Korea. Huang gave Kim Hongjip, to bring back with him to Korea, a book which he had written, the Korean title of which was *Chosŏn ch'aeknyak* (A Strategy for Korea). In this book, Huang identified Russian invasion as the biggest threat Chosŏn faced and proceeded to suggest the diplomatic strategy which Korea should adopt in order to ward off an invasion from Russia: "stay close to China, associate with Japan, and ally with America". As Chosŏn already had relations with China and Japan, Huang's suggestion can be viewed as the extension of Korea's existing policy. The new diplomatic policy put forward in Huang's work was in essence based on China's belief that Korea should establish relations with the US. China, which had grown weary of the growth of Japanese power on the Korean peninsula in the aftermath of the Kanghwa Treaty, saw such a policy as the best means of restraining Japanese expansion.

However, this suggestion that relations should be established with the US was bound to meet with serious resistance from the yangban intellectuals. Chosŏn had refused to open its doors to the US in 1871, even when threatened with war by an American ship. However, the Chosŏn government, having decided, after discussions among government officials on the report presented by the Susinsa, that the policy direction put forward in *A Strategy for Korea* was appropriate, was now advocating the forging of such ties with the US. Chosŏn, agreeing that Russia was its biggest threat, decided to adopt a policy of staying close to China, associating with Japan, and allying with America. The Chosŏn government rapidly set about distributing the provisions contained in Huang Tsun-hsien's work to its people in order to gain public support for its new stance. However, as the contents of this book spread so did the resistance emanating from Confucian circles. The 'Ten thousand people's petition to the King' (*Yŏngnam maninso*), instigated by Confucian scholars in the Yŏngnam area, was a representative example of this resistance.

The debate about the provisions put forward in *A Strategy for Korea* created political conflicts and confrontation among the ruling class itself. The emergence of such opposition within Korea had been expected by the Chinese, who were the main proponents of this new policy direction. China justified its suggestion that Korea forge ties with the US on the following grounds: the US was not a country embracing Catholicism, a religion which the yangban intellectuals had been rabidly opposed to; as the US was located at the other end of the Pacific ocean, the possibility of its invading Chosŏn was non-existent; the US moreover was only interested in advancing its trade and commercial interests. The yangban Confucian class repelled this line of argument, maintaining instead that signing a treaty with the US would mean establishing treaties with other Western powers, all of which would result in Chosŏn being abandoned to these barbaric countries which did not even have any notions of propriety.

Despite the resistance from this group of people, as exemplified by the Yŏngnam maninso, the will of the Chosŏn government to see this reform policy through was very strong. As a result, 1881 can be regarded as an important year in the formation of Chosŏn's domestic and international policies. Vehement yangban objections notwithstanding, the Chosŏn government forged ahead with its policy and concluded the Korean-American Treaty on 6 April 1882, which was followed a month later by a treaty with Britain. However, one month after the signing of this Korean-British Treaty, a rebellion led by soldiers opposed to the opening policy broke out, more widely known as the *Imo kullan* (Soldiers' Riot of 1882). The soldiers began by attacking high-positioned administrators close to Queen Min. Urged on by the lower classes, they proceeded to expand the targets of their wrath to include the Japanese Legation in Seoul. The worsening of the rebellion, which had by now spread to the

lower classes, led King Kojong to diffuse this potentially explosive situation by bringing the conservative-backed Taewŏn'gun back to power.

The return of the Taewŏn'gun and his supporters, all of whom were fervently against efforts to open up the country, meant that King Kojong's opening and reform policy was forced to grind to a temporary halt. On hearing about the situation unfolding in Chosŏn, China proceeded to send troops to restore the king to power, thus breaking its long-held policy of non-intervention in Korean internal affairs. China quickly set about organising a military force of 3,000 soldiers, an advance unit of which was dispatched to Seoul through Namyang Bay on the west coast a mere six days after the outbreak of the rebellion. The Chinese military force arrested the Taewŏn'gun, who was seen as the central figure of the conservative faction, and brought him back to China, while also quelling the insurgency. This rapid and unsolicited deployment of troops to Korea by the Chinese was an incident that had never before occurred in the history of Qing-Chosŏn relations. As a result of this Chinese military intervention, King Kojong was restored to power and Seoul was once again quiet.

During the Soldiers' Riot, four Japanese officials from the Japanese Legation who had been invited to Korea as military advisers and interpreters were killed. The Japanese government painted this incident, which had been the result of the resistance to the Chosŏn government's policy of opening up, as the first anti-Japanese movement to emerge overseas since the Meiji Restoration. By depicting it as such and issuing dire warnings about the possibility of war with China, the Japanese government was able to establish the institutional devices it needed to control the anti-government faction which had been gaining support since the Meiji Restoration. The Japanese government was able to use the political events in Chosŏn to proclaim new laws on the military, thus establishing the measures that it needed to control its own anti-government faction. Japan followed China's lead and sent 1,500 of its own soldiers to Seoul. Suddenly 3,000 Chinese soldiers and 1,500 Japanese ones were squaring off against each other in the streets of Seoul.

It was under such circumstances that King Kojong proclaimed the royal edict, which made clear to the international community the Chosŏn government's will to forge ahead with its opening and reform policy:

Chosŏn, being located on the periphery of Asia, has never had the opportunity to negotiate with foreign countries. While we do not have a wide knowledge of the world, we have been able to preserve our country for 500 years by keeping the door closed. However, the world of today is nothing like the one of the past. Western countries such as England, France, Russia and the United States have developed weapons and implemented projects designed to develop and strengthen their countries. They have concluded treaties with all the countries they have come across during their travels by land or sea. These countries have abided by international law and restrained each other from using military force. This is reminiscent of the Chinese Spring and Autumn Warring States of the past. As a

result, even China, which for long was considered to be the dominant country, concluded equal treaties. Japan, another country which long opposed any intercourse with Western countries, eventually gave in and established treaties and opened its doors. Such things did not magically occur. They occurred because there was no other option.

It was under these circumstances that Chosŏn signed the Kanghwa Treaty with Japan in 1876 and opened three of its ports. Recently Chosŏn has concluded treaties with the United States, England and Germany. As this represents a first for our country, it is natural for the public to be curious and speak ill about these treaties. However, as the principle of these treaties is based on the notion of equality, no further justification for these treaties is required. The intention of these two countries with regard to their stationing of troops here is ostensibly to protect their merchants. As such, there is no need to worry about the present situation ... The people who oppose these treaties argue that establishing treaties with Western countries will eventually lead the whole country to be taken over by heterodoxy. Such a situation would create a serious problem for Confucianism, and the enlightenment of the world. Nevertheless, to establish relations with Western powers is to establish relations with Western powers. Heterodoxy is heterodoxy. These are two different things. The commercial trade established through treaties is based solely on international law. These treaties do not call for the introduction of heterodoxy; as such, why would a people who have learned Confucianism and maintained the Confucian culture for such a long period of time change their attitudes and accept heterodoxy? ... In addition, a perception has been formed in which anybody who learns the Western technologies needed to manufacture a machine is considered to have been taken over by heterodoxy. This is a very wrong attitude to take. While Westerners' religions, as they are considered to be heterodoxy closely related to temptation and sensuality, should be kept at arm's length, their machines are highly developed. If we can use their technologies to develop our economy and to improve our people's living standards, then why should we not use them to produce agricultural equipment, medical supplies, weapons and means of transportation? It is possible for us to accept their technologies, while refusing their religions ... I am well aware that these people, who are difficult to enlighten, and the instability they cause among the public have led to the disastrous incident which broke out here in June ...

Fortunately the incident was resolved and the previous amicable relationships were restored. In the future, England, and the United States will come to our country. The conclusion of commercial treaties is a common practice which countries engage in. As this is not the first time that Korea has signed such an agreement, there is no need for the people to panic. Please do not be scared or worry about these things. Scholars should study and the people should engage in their respective occupations. Do not create any turbulence by spreading incorrect information about Westerners and the Japanese ... Furthermore, as we have already established relations with Western powers, the chŏkhwabi should be removed. You, the people, should keep such things in mind.⁵

As can be seen, Kojong's order that the chŏkhwabi erected nationwide after the war with the US in 1871 be removed was conveniently placed at the end of this edict. Meanwhile, in the opening section, King Kojong pointed out how Chosŏn had

been closed off to the outside since its foundation. However, just as China eventually entered the era of the Spring and Autumn Warring States, all countries were now attempting to develop their economies and strengthen their military might on the basis of international law. King Kojong also pointed out that Chosŏn had been forced to conclude the Kanhwa Treaty with Japan in order to respond to this international trend. Although he recognised the existence of objections to the Kanhwa Treaty based on the notion of *ch'ŏkhwa* (that is, defending orthodoxy and rejecting heterodoxy), the king deemed such worries to be unnecessary and emphasised the need to negotiate with Western countries.

The King's understanding of the international scene began with his order that a review be undertaken with regard to the diplomatic credentials provided by the Japanese, a move which met with fierce opposition domestically. However by the time the Kanhwa Treaty was concluded, Kojong had begun to emphasise the notion of *waeyang pulliron* over the notion of *waeyang ilch'eron*, supported by the majority of the members of the ruling class. In the end, however, he accepted the notion of *Taeseron*, which was based on the belief that the establishment of relations with Western nations was a global stream that could not be reversed. King Kojong, who separated politics from commerce and advocated the separation of politics and religion, believed in the inevitability of the opening of the country. Furthermore, by ordering the removal of the *ch'ŏkhwabi* nationwide, which had served as the symbol of the government's anti-opening policy until that point, he completely did away with the justification for refusing this opening policy and showed his acceptance of the reality of the international situation.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the changes in the ruling power's and King Kojong's perception of international trends in order to analyse the process through which the Chosŏn government opened up the country to the West. Previous studies have for the most part concentrated on examining political and diplomatic relations during this period. This paper emerged as a result of the fact that previous studies, while considering the process through which Chosŏn opened up towards the West, have overlooked the correlation between changes in the political power structure and the diplomatic policymaking process. In addition, previous studies have also failed to analyse sufficiently the ruling faction which played the leading role in implementing understanding of the policies of opening up.

The process through which Chosŏn opened up toward the West can be summarized thus:

First, Chosŏn hung on to its existing order for twenty years longer than China and Japan, both of which succumbed to increasing Western penetration of East Asia

during the middle of the 19th century and opened their doors. Western demands that Chosŏn open its market started with the military provocations initiated by the US and France during the period from 1866 to 1871. However, the country remained closed to the West even after the Kanhwa Treaty of 1876. It would take another six years after that treaty was signed before Chosŏn started to actually open its market to the West. This opening came in the form of the Korean-American and Korean-British treaties of 1882.

The opening of Chosŏn towards the West came much later than in the case of China and Japan, and can be regarded as having been carried out in an incremental manner. In addition, the major powers which emerged to first demand the opening of Chosŏn were France and the US, two countries which developed capitalism later on, and not the pre-eminent capitalist nation with the strongest navy in the world, Britain. However, it was Japan who played the leading role in getting Chosŏn to join the capitalist market order.

Previous studies on Chosŏn's opening process have concentrated on the bureaucratic power which emerged in Korea, and its influence on the acceptance of the opening policy. In contrast, this paper has focused on the relationship between King Kojong and his leadership group's political standing and their perception of Japan and of the Western powers. Even in the period immediately preceding the signing of the treaty with Japan in 1876, opposition to the opening policy remained widely prevalent among those holding political power, Confucian scholars and the lower classes. It was against such a backdrop that King Kojong and his closest aides pursued their opening policy, which eventually resulted in the Kanhwa Treaty of 1876.

The question may be asked why King Kojong and his aides, faced with such strong resistance from this anti-opening group, actively pursued their policy? Immediately on his ascent to power King Kojong set about removing his father's influence and establishing diplomatic relations with Japan. King Kojong carried out this opening policy toward Japan based on the notion of waeyang pulliron and not on the more widely accepted concept of waeyang ilch'eron promoted by the conservative faction opposed to the establishment of such relations with Japan. In the 1880s King Kojong refused the notion of *ch'ŏksaron*, the doctrine of defending orthodoxy and rejecting heterodoxy, while supporting the idea of setting up diplomatic ties with the US, which was a Christian country, before establishing them with other Western nations. In addition, King Kojong addressed the fear that the establishment of diplomatic relations would result in damage to the domestic market by stating that politics should be separated from commerce.

The political position of the Chosŏn government can be exemplified by the *ch'ŏkhwabi* which were erected nationwide after the French (1866) and American (1871) attacks. The Chosŏn government's opening policy towards the West became

more invigorated from the time the political resistance of the conservative group opposing King Kojong and his policies was eliminated as a result of the intervention of the Chinese military in Korea. This occurred six years after the signing of the Kanhwa Treaty with Japan.

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Notes

1. *Sunjo Silrok*, July, the 32nd year of King Sunjo. In 1968, the National History Compilation Committee published an edition of the *Sunjo Silrok*.
2. For more about the treaty process with Japan, see Deok-Soo Choi (Ch'oe Töksu), 2001. 'King Kojong's perception of the West during the period of opening of ports', *International Journal of Korean History*, vol.2:12.
3. *Sŭngjŏngwŏn Ilgi* [The daily records of the Royal Secretariat of the Chosŏn dynasty], 23 January, the 13th Year of King Kojong. In 1995, the Korean Classics Research Institute published an edition of the *Sŭngjŏngwŏn Ilgi*.
4. *Sŭngjŏngwŏn Ilgi*, 27 January, the 13th year of King Kojong.
5. *Sŭngjŏngwŏn Ilgi*, 5 August, the 19th year of King Kojong.