‘Emperor at Home, King Abroad’

Managing Competing Order-Building Projects through Spatial Organisation in Early Modern East Asia

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Declaration

I declare this dissertation is a product of my own original research, and all sources have been appropriately acknowledged. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of the author's knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

Michael Varnay

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For Anaka

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It feels appropriate that the final section I complete for this project is the acknowledgements. Having spent the past five years down in the weeds trying to make sense of the sociopolitical developments that occurred in East Asia well before anyone alive today was born, it provides an opportunity to make sense of this work's place in my life beyond the confines of my office. For in the process of completing my PhD I have formed some of the most significant relationships, both professional and personal, of my life. Many of these began in the context of researching, writing, and editing this manuscript and I have no doubt will continue long after my PhD becomes a distant memory. They have all enriched this project immeasurably over the years. While the space I have set aside here to thank them cannot do justice to their contributions, I will try my best to convey my gratitude.

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Abstract

Accounts of historical East Asia within International Relations (IR) foreground Chinese hierarchy- or order-building projects. This thesis compliments existing accounts with the concurrent hierarchical ordering projects of Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, to produce a more holistic understanding of the region. Focusing on the early modern period from the rise of the Ming to the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century, I identify a key puzzle associated with this situation – the lack of a singular organising logic which produced competing efforts at hierarchical stratification contradicting one another. The existence of competing orders at best produces instability and at worst risks conflict. Yet the situation in East Asia remained stable and endured long-term. How did competing order-building projects in early modern East Asia co-exist despite the tensions their mutually exclusive claims generated? Rather than attribute early modern East Asia's stability to hierarchical order, this project sees the endurance of hierarchy as something requiring explanation. I argue an underexplored spatial dimension explains how actors legitimised the authority of their competing order-building projects and allowed them to co-exist despite their mutually exclusive claims. Their authority operated on an inside/outside dynamic within distinct locations as reflected in the contemporaneous phrase 'wài wáng nèi dì' or 'emperor at home, king abroad'. This captures how East Asian rulers took on different roles through contradictory performances within their own order and those of competing actors.

To demonstrate this, I explore the relative success of the order-building projects of Tokugawa Japan, Joseon Korea, and Đại Việt in constructing their own hierarchy and departing from the prevailing Sinocentric order. I begin by conceptualising early modern East Asia as a polycentric hierarchy – a heterarchical formation consisting of multiple centres not resting on a shared organising logic. Each established hierarchy in practice through interaction rituals at the micro-level that constituted how order was experienced by actors. Together, these produced competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas throughout the East Asian system. I explain the endurance of this formation by introducing the segmentation of space. Segmentation ensured contradictory understandings remained spatially separate. Through spatial organisation, actors could dictate when, where, and how the interaction rituals structuring relations between actors occurred in a particular space. Doing so established a logic of appropriateness and demands on behaviour within physical locations aligning performances with that actor's vision of order. Inside, authority is

expressed on an autonomous basis whereas outside authority is hierarchically delegated. It is observable in East Asian thought and practice, particularly the maritime controls and restrictions on movement applied by all actors in the system. Nevertheless, considering the tensions associated with participating in interaction rituals conveying a status at odds with an actor's understanding, performance strategies allowed this to be managed. Here, avoidance, manipulation, accommodation, and confrontation could alter performances on the ground to distance an actor or ensure compliance with particular understandings. This situation is observable in the composition, mobilisation, and presentation of embassy missions as they travelled between countries. Finally, I account for three instances in which polycentric hierarchy broke down – Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula, the Ming-Qing transition, and the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. This is attributed to declining ritual efficacy as the context inhabited by actors shifted across this period. Together, they highlight how management, not resolution, of competing order-building projects is secured on an ongoing basis.

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Chapter One – Introduction

In 1780 and 1790, envoys across East Asia and Eurasia gathered in Chengde to mark the seventieth and eightieth birthday of the Qianlong Emperor. Upon his death in 1799, Qianlong's tenure as China's longest reigning monarch saw the Qing Empire reach its greatest extent. Therefore, these events were remarkable in several ways. In terms of scale, it was rare for all these envoys to gather concurrently in the same location in the early modern period. This conveyed Qianlong's power to command such rare displays. Alongside envoys from East Asian kingdoms in Korea, Ryukyu, and Vietnam, the conquered peoples of Eurasia sent envoys recognising Qianlong's claimed universal authority. Mobilising actors for these events was a considerable feat. To participate in these celebrations' envoys surmounted considerable distances over land and sea. Technological limitations for this period presented a major obstacle and presented significant hardship to envoys as it could take several months for them to travel there and back home again. Performances of these celebrations took place at the Imperial Summer Palace at Chengde. This backdrop conveyed the extent of the Qing order and the diverse array of peoples who fell under his authority. It allowed the Qing to construct symbolic landmarks drawn from across their domain.[1] These birthday celebrations allowed Qianlong to express his universal authority to those gathered before him. Indeed, across early modern East Asia, performances served a central role in establishing authority relationships between actors.[2] Consisting of highly choreographed ritual encounters between the envoys of East Asian rulers derived from their diverse political and cultural traditions, performances maintained an equilibrium and established their identities within a relationship through ongoing repetition. Here, participation constituted how order was understood and, more importantly, experienced by actors mobilised in these performances.

Thus, for Qianlong and the members of his court these celebrations confirmed their understandings of order and secured their rule's legitimacy through acts of recognition. Most importantly, it allowed Qianlong to convey the authority of other East Asian rulers was his to bestow. Descended from a semi-nomadic people in present-day China's northeast, the Manchu people deposed the Ming in 1644 and established their rule over large swathes of

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[1] Agui, "Grand Ceremony of the Eightieth Birthday Ceremony," (1790), Chinese Text Project, https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&file=145387&page=9; Mark C. Elliott, *Emperor Qianlong: Son of Heaven, Man of the World* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2009): 145; Philippe Forêt, *Mapping Chengde: The Qing Landscape Enterprise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000): 15-17.

[2] Jorg Kustermans, "Gift-giving as a Source of International Authority," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 12, no. 3 (2019): 395-426.

Eurasia. As a 'conquest dynasty', the Qing remained particularly sensitive in justifying their position. By engaging and incorporating the different cultural and religious traditions of their empire in these celebrations, the Qing could be all things to all people. This narrative is well-known to International Relations (IR). Yet these accounts only consider the Qing understanding. What is less established is how the East Asian actors participating in these celebrations experienced their performances. While Qing emperors claimed to hold the Mandate of Heaven through these displays, they were perceived of as 'barbarian' throughout East Asia due to their Manchu origin.[3] As will be discussed below in greater detail, envoys from present-day Korea and Vietnam had wildly different experiences when celebrating Qianlong's birthday. Their own accounts do not mask their displeasure in participating or their distrust and contempt for the Qing and their pretensions. More importantly, participation was understood as challenging their own expressions of authority at home. Considering the importance of interaction rituals to maintaining relationships between actors, the conflicting experiences of participants is surprising. Rather than confirm understandings of status and authority in their relationships, they only masked ambiguities. How rituals continued despite the conflicting experiences of participants is not easily explained.

IR often takes for granted consensus existing in the performance of rituals. Their ongoing repetition is taken as demonstrating participants accepted the formal meanings they conveyed, or at worst did not find them particularly objectionable. Yet this was not the case in the celebrations surrounding Qianlong where the very acts seeking to regularise expectations simultaneously produced tensions. While participation stabilised relations with the Qing, it concurrently challenged the basis of authority for participants at home. Here, the dispositions of actors revealed contestation just as much as consensus as lingering disagreements remained hidden under the surface of performances. Such a tension is not unknown in existing accounts stressing negotiation between rulers and ruled in all dimensions of their relationship throughout the international system. However, if order was experienced in the performance of rituals, the presence of subjective understandings raises questions as to what actors experienced. This situation was replete across performances throughout East Asia at this time. Indeed, this situation is symptomatic of a source of greater tension in the early modern period – East Asia's ruling dynasties pursued separate hierarchical order-building projects resting on competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas. These were

[3] Yuanchong Wang, "Civilizing the Great Qing: Manchu-Korean Relations and the Reconstruction of the Chinese Empire, 1644-1761," *Late Imperial China* 38, no. 1 (2017): 113-121.

expressed through their own interaction rituals confirming particular understandings of order even as those participating often disagreed. Put simply, pursuit of hierarchical order without a shared organising logic by actors across the region contradicted one another. Nevertheless, they endured over the long-term. How do competing order-building projects in early modern East Asia co-exist despite the tensions their mutually exclusive claims generate?

I argue an underexplored spatial dimension explains how competing order-building projects in early modern East Asia co-existed despite inherent tensions. Constituting the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries, existing accounts in IR are bifurcated into two branches explaining how authority is established within an order. Hierarchical delegation understands authority as passing from superordinate to subordinate actors through investiture. Conversely, autonomous production saw appropriation of shared ideological resources by actors to legitimise their position independently. Both formed a basis for legitimising authority despite contradicting through an inside/outside dynamic situating these in particular locations.[4] Within IR, legitimacy remains a concept employed in numerous circumstances yet is not well-defined and holds contested meanings.[5] Rather than a normative belief in complying with a rule or institution, it is instead driven by what is considered appropriate within a wider social context.[6] Consequently, on the inside actors autonomously produced their authority while accepting its hierarchical delegation outside. This dynamic is reflected in the East Asian saying '*wài wáng nèi dì*' or 'emperor at home, king abroad' recognising how rulers took on different statuses within and beyond their country. These contradictions should produce instability at best and conflict at worst. Yet the tensions generated by mutually exclusive authorities proved capable of co-existing without converging on shared understandings. Consequently, rather than an either-or approach, my account seeks a both-and understanding. Neither approach is incorrect, but rather only focuses on one half of the picture to explain how orders were legitimised in early modern East Asia.

This project provides a more holistic account of order in early modern East Asia by exploring competing order-building projects simultaneously. While IR has moved

[4] Within IR, the most prominent account of an inside/outside dynamic is put forward by R.B.J. Walker. While employing the same term, my account is unrelated as it maps an inside/outside dynamic to the process of spatial organisation by actors. R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
[5] Shane P. Mulligan, "The Uses of Legitimacy in International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 34, no. 2 (2006): 349-375.
[6] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Rethinking Weber: Toward a Non-Individualist Sociology of World Politics," *International Review of Sociology* 12, no. 3 (2002): 439-468.

rhetorically from Sinocentric explanations and considered other East Asian dynasties' perspectives, none explore their distinct hierarchical orders on their terms. As such, my project focuses on the order-building projects of Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese rulers. I focus on how each engaged in segmentation, establishing a distinct space to express the authority claims and normative agenda of their order-building project. Within each space they established interaction rituals reflecting their vision of order and forcing actors to align with these understandings inside. To demonstrate this, I highlight how each actor organised relations with both the Ming and Qing dynasties alongside other East Asian rulers. To explain how mutually exclusive claims did not produce instability, I show how relationships were managed through performance strategies employed at the micro-level of international life which constituted where actors experienced order day-to-day. Doing so managed, but never resolved, tensions as they arose in the interaction rituals structuring encounters between them.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, to capture the puzzle I expand on the opening anecdote to showcase how interaction rituals structuring relations between East Asian actors generated just as much tension as they resolved. Second, I outline how IR approaches issues related to competing order-building projects in early modern East Asia. I identify limitations in existing approaches that are bifurcated into treating authority within order as either hierarchically delegated or autonomously produced. Drawing on literature in adjacent disciplines reveals new pathways offered by spatial organisation and interaction rituals to explain how these contradictions can be managed. Third, I establish the main argument of this project. Rival order-building projects co-exist through segmentation which kept their competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas separate. When encounters occur, performance strategies manage interaction rituals. Fourth, I illustrate this project's methodology and how each case study is structured. Fifth, I provide the plan of the dissertation by providing this project's roadmap. Finally, I point to the contributions of this project in relation to both the case itself and wider theoretical debates in IR. Thus, I am able to showcase the new knowledge it provides to the discipline.

Celebrating the Qianlong Emperor

Reigning from 1735 to 1796, the Qianlong Emperor's rule extended the Qing Empire to its greatest extent. Situating their Manchu dynasty at the centre of not just East Asian but Eurasian political life, interaction rituals structuring relations between Qianlong and other rulers recognised his claims to universal authority. This was not always achieved peacefully.

Violence remained central to constructing order. For example, one of Qianlong's 'Ten Great Campaigns' saw the conquest of present-day Xinjiang and the elimination of the Zunghar Khanate.[7] This resulted in genocide against the Zunghar Mongols and the colonisation of their territory by Manchu, Han, Hui, Uyghur, and Xibe people.[8] Furthermore, incursions against the Konbaung and Tây Sơn dynasties in Burma and Đại Việt respectively demonstrate Qianlong's willingness to use force against rival efforts to consolidate order challenging his authority claims.[9] Ruling over a multi-ethnic empire raised questions over how this universal authority was expressed. In East Asia, the Qing maintained the interaction rituals structuring relations between Chinese emperors and East Asian rulers. Further afield, the Qing legitimised their authority multi-vocally by employing Buddhism, Islam, and the language of kinship in relations with Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Asian polities respectively. Nevertheless, this multi-vocality occurred under Qing hegemony and saw local interaction rituals rewritten to reflect their master narrative. Ethnographic techniques employed during colonisation revealed local "courtship practices, religious customs, seasonal festivals, and sketches from everyday life" which constructed identities in-line with the Qing worldview.[10] For example, Qianlong asserted his own prerogative for selecting Tibetan and Mongolian lamas in the 1792 *Lama shuo* (Pronouncements on Lamas), reformatting the 'lama-patron' interaction ritual to assert Qing prerogatives against local understandings.[11] Hidden behind formal meanings are the subjective understandings of participants. These tensions within interaction rituals can be seen playing out in the celebrations of Qianlong's seventieth and eightieth birthday.

The Imperial Summer Palace at Chengde served as the venue where the extent of the Qing order was performed before Qianlong. Located beyond the Great Wall, it was situated in Rehe Province which served as the meeting point for China, Manchuria, and Mongolia and allowed the Qing to assert power over the central domains of their empire. What had begun as a hunting lodge for recreational use by Qing rulers had seen Qianlong deploy

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[7] Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Asia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005): 9-11.
[8] James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007): 95; Perdue, *China Marches West*, 282-287.
[9] Yingcong Dai, "A Disguised Defeat: The Myanmar Campaign of the Qing Dynasty," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004): 145-189; Peter C. Perdue, "Embracing Victory, Effacing Defeat: Rewriting the Qing Frontier," Chap. 6 in *The Chinese State at the Borders*, ed. Diana Lary (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007): 105-125.
[10] Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001): 5-6.
[11] James Hevia, "Lamas, Emperors, and Rituals: Political Implications in Qing Imperial Ceremonies," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 16, no. 2 (1993): 244.

> Armies of hydrologists, gardeners, carpenters, and masons [which] transformed what had been a rather swampy piece of ground at the foot of a hill into a vast and meticulously planned garden and palace complex, its landscaping, plantings, and structures chosen to represent iconic scenes from across the continent. In time, the former modest villa was replaced by a glittering architectural showcase, studded with references to the monarch's military achievements and his cosmological position; artworks housed inside depicted the ruler as a god. The royal court took up residence in the complex, where courtiers and nobility from across the realm enjoyed rich feasts and spectacular entertainments. Not content to let guests enjoy the lovely setting on their own, however, the monarch personally wrote a guidebook instructing them in the proper viewing of its various vistas.[12]

Serving as a microcosm of the Qing order, the symbolic landmarks at Chengde displayed the extent of their territory through "reference to significant places in the Qing Empire that were located in China, Mongolia, and Tibet."[13] Nevertheless, its construction reflected Qianlong's personal beliefs and particular fixation with Tibetan Buddhism.[14] For example, the Putuo Zongcheng Temple completed for his sixtieth birthday was modelled on the Potola Palace in Lhasa. Most importantly, this backdrop served as one of the few sites in the early modern period wherein East Asian polities simultaneously took part in the same performance.

A diverse array of actors celebrated these milestone birthdays which conveyed the extent of the Qing order. While the Kangxi Emperor formally held the longest reign, with Qianlong abdicating before his sixty-first year as emperor in an act of filial piety, his rule as 'Emperor Emeritus' until his death in 1799 meant he held the longest tenure of any monarch in Chinese history. Indeed, in an essay entitled *Guxi shuo* ('On Being Seventy'), the Qianlong Emperor publicly reflected on his own life and compared this to the few previous emperors who reached this milestone.[15] Therefore, the rarity and scale of these celebrations in East Asian history was apparent to participants. An envoy from Joseon noted in awe that Qianlong received 30,000 cartloads of gifts for his seventieth birthday, not including those carried on

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[12] Ruth W. Dunnell and James A. Millward, "Introduction," in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of the Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, eds et al. James A. Milward (London: Routledge, 2004): 1.
[13] Forêt, *Mapping* Chengde, 15-17.
[14] Elisabeth Benard, "The Qianlong emperor and Tibetan Buddhism," Chap. 10 in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of the Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, eds et al. James A. Milward (London: Routledge, 2004): 123-124; Elliott, *Emperor* Qianlong, 145.
[15] Qianlong Emperor, "Guxi shuo," (1780), IHP Archive, https://ihparchive.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihpkmc/ihpkm_op?!!NO-434130303031353539383 4.

poles or the backs of horses and camels.[16] Furthermore, Qianlong enforced 'compulsory donations' from his civil service which mobilised them in financing these celebrations.[17] Attendance conveyed the extent of the Qing order. For his eightieth birthday, envoys were dispatched by rulers throughout the Qing order including Joseon, 'Annam' (Vietnam), Ryukyu, Lan Xang (Laos), Burma, and the Taiwanese indigenous peoples. Alongside these envoys, Han Chinese officials, Manchu and Mongolian princes, and Kazakh, Uyghur, and other chieftains of ethnic minorities throughout southern China participated.[18] Also in attendance was the Frenchmen Joseph-Marie Amiot, one of the few remaining Jesuits in China who through his friendship with the Manchu Prince Hongwu presented the *Desheng tu* portraits commemorating Qianlong's military campaigns.[19] Finally, while occurring two years later, the Macartney Embassy of 1793 dispatched by the British Empire formally expressed King George III's congratulations to the Qianlong Emperor for his eightieth birthday.[20] In staging events of such rarity and scale, Qianlong demonstrated not only the extent of his order, but legitimised his authority through the incorporation of participants into this performance. Indeed, artistic depictions of their procession and celebration of his eightieth birthday consisted of two scrolls measuring sixty-three metres in length each.[21] These allowed the Qing to convey the image of these celebrations long after their performance. Thus, ritual performances constituted how Qianlong experienced and perceived order.

However, the experience of participants within these celebrations often diverged sharply as seen in the experiences of envoys from Joseon and Đại Việt. Here, their subjective understandings stood at odds with the formal meaning established by Qing protocol. For Joseon, participation in the Qing order-building project belied their antipathy towards the Manchus who were considered 'barbarians'. This is seen in Bak Jiwon's account of Qianlong's seventieth birthday recorded in the *Yeolha ilgi* ('Jehol Diary'). Although maintaining this orthodox attitude towards the Manchus, Bak's membership in the *Silhak*

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[16] Elliott, *Emperor Qianlong*, 116.
[17] Alexander Woodside, "The Ch'ien-Lung Reign," Chap. 5 in *The Cambridge History of China Volume 9, Part 1: The Ch'ing Empire to 1800*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 303-304.
[18] Agui, "Grand Ceremony of the Eightieth Birthday Ceremony".
[19] Alexander Statman, "A Forgotten Friendship: How a French Missionary and a Manchu Prince Studied Electricity and Ballooning in Late Eighteenth Century Beijing," *East Asian Science, Technology, and Medicine* 46 (2017): 103-104.
[20] James Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995): 135.
[21] John Keay, "The Celestial Court," *The Court Historian* 11, no. 1 (2006): 75.

(School of Practical Learning) acknowledged Qing governance as a model to pursue reforms at home. Nevertheless, censorship by the Joseon court ensured his work aligned with the prevailing orthodoxy.[22] Tension between Joseon's Neo-Confucian worldview and Qianlong's patronage of Tibetan Buddhism came to the surface at Chengde as Joseon's envoys were invited to visit "the saintly man from the western area", the Panchen Lama. Qianlong had extended a personal invitation to the Panchen Lama to attend his seventieth birthday.[23] Despite their contempt of Buddhism, Qianlong ordered the Koreans to visit. Nevertheless, they refused to kowtow to the Panchen Lama despite Qianlong's requests and deftly justified this by highlighting Qing vassals had no right to conduct diplomacy with others. Communications proved convoluted as the Panchen Lama spoke to the Mongol prince next to him who forwarded the message to the Qing interpreter, who passed it to Joseon's interpreter who finally translated the words into Korean, making it unclear how much the Koreans and Tibetans understood one another. Even the gift of three small bronze figures of the Buddha proved problematic since such figurines were forbidden at home. Joseon's envoys sold these and distributed the silver among their servants.[24] For Joseon, Qianlong's patronage of Buddhism and their participation contradicted expectations of propriety. For them, it symbolised the continued decline of Classical Civilization under Qing rule. Rather than confirm Qing universal authority, these interaction rituals reinforced their critical attitudes towards the Manchus.

Similar issues faced Đại Việt's Tây Sơn dynasty as they participated in celebrations of Qianlong's eightieth birthday. Initial encounters between Tây Sơn and the Qing had not been ideal. Coming to power in 1778, the Tây Sơn had begun as a peasant rebellion harbouring anti-Chinese attitudes that unified Đại Việt by defeating the rulers of the competing northern and southern polities.[25] Inability to reach an accommodation with the reigning Lê dynasty saw Tây Sơn depose Emperor Lê Chiêu Thống who fled to China. Qianlong oversaw a failed intervention to restore the Lê from 1788 to 1789 as their dynasty had been invested with the

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[22] Pak Chiwŏn, *The Jehol Diary: Yŏrha ilgi of Pak Chiwŏn (1737-1805)*, trans. Yang Hi Choe-Well (Kent, Global Oriental, 2010): xv-xvii.
[23] Nima Dorjee Ragnubs, "The Third Panchen Lama's visit to Chengde," Chap. 16 in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of the Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, eds et al. James A. Milward (London: Routledge, 2004): 188-198.
[24] Yuanchong Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire: Manchu-Korean Relations*, 1616-1911 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2018): 94-97.
[25] George E. Dutton, *The Tây Sơn Uprising: Society and Rebellion in Eighteenth-Century Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006): 1-6.

right to rule and thus their overthrow was perceived as challenging their universal authority.[26] To ensure recognition, Emperor Quang Trung was required to personally travel north to seek investiture as 'king'. This demand drew on a historical practice wherein new Vietnamese dynasties 'opposing' China surrendered and begged forgiveness. Often this involved sending a gold statue of their person.[27] Arriving in Chengde for celebrations, Quang Trung took several actions to ingratiate themselves with Qianlong. The Tây Sơn retinue adopted Manchu clothing rather than traditional Ming-style costumes which saw both Joseon and Ryukyu's envoys openly complain. In his 'Poem on Travel Notes of Jehol', Joseon envoy Lu Deuggong declared Tây Sơn's actions forsook 'civilization' for 'barbarism'. Nevertheless, Qianlong was deeply impressed by this act, lavishing attention and rewards upon Quang Trung. Yet what seemed like reconciliation is complicated by the fact it was his body double who attended.[28] Indeed, as Tây Sơn would be the first dynasty to accede to their emperor visiting China, it would undermine their legitimacy to much of the Vietnamese elite back home.[29] Yet failure to do so risked a return to conflict with the Qing. Far from legitimising their authority, participation in Qianlong's eightieth birthday presented a challenge for Tây Sơn.

How then can we understand the nature of these performances? Certainly, the wide range of East Asian and Eurasian actors participating within interaction rituals associated with Qianlong's birthdays served as the physical acts recognising their order and confirming Qing claims to universal authority.[30] Yet as has been seen, participants experienced these interaction rituals in considerably different ways despite their mutual intelligibility. For Joseon, Qianlong's insistence on their meeting with the Panchen Lama clashed with their Neo-Confucian worldview and reconfirmed narratives of the Qing as 'barbarians'.[31]

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[26] Dutton, *The Tây Sơn Uprising*, 46-49.

[27] Truong Buu Lam, "Intervention Versus Tribute in Sino-Vietnamese Relations, 1788-1790," in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968): 174-175.

[28] Zhaoguang Ge, "Costume, Ceremonial, and the East Asian Order: What the Annamese King Wore When Congratulating the Emperor Qianlong in Jehol in 1790," *Frontiers of History in China* 7, no. 1 (2012): 136-151; Liam C. Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars: Envoy Poetry and the Sino-Vietnamese Relationship* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005): 179-180; Truong, "Intervention Versus Tribute," 174-177.

[29] Opposition to Vietnamese rulers visiting the Chinese capital originated in the precedent of Triệu Văn Vương (c. Zhao Mo) of Nanyue sending his son to the Han court in 135 B.C.E. The marriage of his son and Nanyue's eventual king Triệu Anh Tề (c. Zhao Yingqi) to a Chinese woman was seen as a Han plot to infiltrate and destabilise Nanyue before its annexation in 111 B.C.E. While this historical interpretation is dubious, it informed popular thinking on the appropriateness of ruler's visiting China for just under two millennia later. Truong, "Intervention Versus Tribute," 324.

[30] Kustermans, "Gift-giving as a Source of International Authority," 395-426.

[31] In-line with the subjective nature of interaction rituals, Tibetan accounts describe the Panchen Lama's meeting with the 'Mañjuśrī emperor' as one between a teacher and their student. Qianlong's distinct identity

Similarly, for Tây Sơn participation jeopardised their position within Đại Việt and was only circumnavigated by sending a body double of their emperor. While ensuring material security by stabilising relations through regularised encounters, participation simultaneously threatened their ontological security. Tensions between the formal meanings and subjective understandings of interaction rituals is emblematic of the wider tensions around rival order-building projects as they encountered one another.

This narrative runs counter to existing explanations around the management of order in early modern East Asia. As will be discussed further below, existing accounts of hierarchical order in early modern East Asia treat this form as the basis for stabilising relations between actors. Furthermore, the treatment of interaction rituals conveying this relationship focuses only on how participation serves to produce authority relationships between rulers. Yet as can be seen, ongoing participation continued even as it delegitimised the basis of authority for many participants. It is symptomatic a broader issue – IR has not yet fully explored the existence of alternative hierarchies in East Asia and the challenges their mutually exclusive claims posed.

Managing Competing Order-Building Projects

In this section I establish the need for IR to seek explanations for the management of order beyond hierarchy. Rather than an explanation for how relations between actors were stabilised, I highlight that acknowledging the existence of competing hierarchical order-building projects and their ability to endure requires its own explanation. First, I highlight the bifurcation of existing approaches into hierarchically delegated and autonomously produced understandings of the legitimisation of authority are incomplete. As both occurred simultaneously despite contradicting logics, an explanation is needed over how this could operate in practice. Second, I follow this by establishing the importance of spatial organisation to establishing order in early modern East Asia. To do so, I demonstrate its presence in historical East Asian thought and practice. Third, I seek to expand our understandings of interaction rituals to capture the tension between their formal meanings and subjective understandings. By drawing on Microsociology to do so, tensions around participation come into greater focus.

within the Tibetan worldview emerged from the belief that Qing emperors were reincarnations of the Mañjuśrī bodhisattva. Ragnubs, "The Third Panchen Lama's visit to Chengde," 188-198.

Authority in Early Modern East Asia

Legitimising authority in early modern East Asia represented a site of tension. Authority was critical in legitimising the relationships between actors within an order and their conduct towards one another. Ji-Young Lee stresses in her account of this period how rather than material preponderance giving a superordinate the basis to legitimise their position, authority results "when defiance by actors was not socially possible… compliance is constrained by the actor's sense of what is considered socially acceptable".[32] This begins to capture their entrenched nature in the East Asian system which confirmed authority and is reflected in historical East Asian thought and practice. Investiture by the Chinese emperor provided the formal basis for relationships between actors at all levels of the system. Understood as universal, they brooked no competitors to their authority. Legitimacy is observed through ongoing interaction rituals confirming actor's positions in relation to one another which constituted the only basis formal diplomacy was conducted. While demonstrating the extent successive dynasties in China had entrenched these rituals, it does not capture the full picture.

East Asian rulers simultaneously legitimised their authority through entrenched interaction rituals situated within their local context. Even if these rituals represented an adaptation of those originating in China, they expressed mutually exclusive understandings of status. Indeed, recent IR literature notes the sensitivities of actors to their status and how disconnects pose a threat to their claims. A sense of dissatisfaction or perceived humiliation can drive actors to rectify perceived slights.[33] Status is linked to identity – a sense of self is irrevocably threatened by a lack of recognition by others. Considering rival order-building projects sought to impose mutually exclusive rankings for status in their hierarchies, performances often stood at odds with their own status claims aligning with their identity. Thus, barring Joseon, East Asian rulers styled themselves emperor or equivalent status ranks. Indeed, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese dynasties legitimised their authority in

[32] Ji-Young Lee, *China's Hegemony: Four Hundred Years of East Asian Domination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017): 56-59

[33] Steven Ward, *Status and the Challenge of Rising Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Joslyn Barnhart, *The Consequences of Humiliation: Anger and Status in World Politics* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2020); Rohan Mukherjee, *Ascending Order: Rising Powers and the Politics of Status in International Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); Michelle Murray, *The Struggle for Recognition in International Relations: Status, Revisionism, and Rising Powers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

contradiction with their relationship to China's emperor.[34] As authority's legitimacy derived from providing as much as receiving investiture, conflicting understandings and their mutually exclusive claims generated tension.[35] This is seen in the Qing response to the 1793 Macartney Embassy in which it prioritised compliance with tributary symbolism and legitimising their authority in the eyes of their Han Chinese population over flexibility in the terms they engaged Europe on.[36] The very existence of contradictions challenged the position of actors and could not be ignored easily.

Research into legitimising authority in early modern East Asia can be divided into two camps - hierarchical delegation and autonomous production. Hierarchical delegation remains the predominant explanation for legitimising authority in this period. It adapts Fairbank and Têng's tributary system concept developed in the 1940s detailing China's idealised vision of hierarchical order centred on the primacy of the Chinese emperor.[37] As Hendrik Spruyt argues "Engaging in tribute provided a means of gaining mutual legitimation vis-à-vis other states, but particularly served rulers in acquiring internal legitimacy."[38] Investiture did not engender any loss of political authority as David Kang highlights, but rather formalised statuses in a shared hierarchy by placing East Asia's rulers under their ritual suzerainty.[39] The process of hierarchical delegation could be adaptive, with Andrew Phillips and Joseph MacKay drawing on the scholarship of the New Qing Historians to highlight the multi-vocality of the Manchus in using local beliefs such as Buddhism, Islam, and the language of kinship to ensure the legitimacy of authority delegated hierarchically.[40] Even

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[34] Ronald P. Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan: Asia in the Development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991): 83-90; Alexander Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model: A Comparative Study of Vietnamese and Chinese Government in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988): 234-246; Kim Pusik, *The Silla Annals of the Samguk Sagi*, trans. Edward J. Schultz and Hugh H.W. Kang with Daniel C. Kane (Seongnam: The Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2012): 260-261.

[35] Paul Musgrave and Daniel H. Nexon, "Defending Hierarchy from the Moon to the Indian Ocean: Symbolic Capital and Political Dominance in Early Modern China and the Cold War," *International Organization* 72, no. 3 (2018): 591-626.

[36] David E. Banks, "Fields of Practice: Symbolic Binding and the Qing Defense of Sinocentric Diplomacy," *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2019): 546-557.

[37] John K. Fairbank and S.Y. Têng, "On the Ch'ing Tributary System," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 6, no. 2 (1941): 135-246; John K. Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968).

[38] Hendrik Spruyt, *The World Imagined: Collective Beliefs and Political Order in the Sinocentric, Islamic, and Southeast Asian International Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020): 85.

[39] David C. Kang, *East Asia Before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010): 56-57.

[40] Andrew Phillips, "Making Empires: Hierarchy, Conquest and Customization," Chap. 2 in *Hierarchies in World Politics*, ed. Ayşe Zarakol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 49; Andrew Phillips, *How the East Was Won: Barbarian Conquerors, Universal Conquest, and the Making of Modern Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge

Yuan-kang Wang's account focused on the role of material power in sustaining hierarchy acknowledges the role of culture in legitimising authority through delegation.[41] Nevertheless, pushback from historians such as Peter Perdue has seen IR distance itself from the tributary system as a concept framing historical East Asian order.[42] Rather than an explanatory concept, theoretical innovation must interrogate this framework.[43] While demonstrating hierarchical delegation constituted a major part of formal diplomacy in this period, it overlooks other methods actors legitimised their authority within order.

Accounts focused on the autonomous production of legitimate authority demonstrate how East Asian rulers often established their position independently. Actors positioned themselves as equals or superiors without reference to understandings of authority in existing relationships by drawing on shared civilizational heritage and/or their local contexts. Ji-Young Lee identifies the role of domestic context in determining whether East Asian rulers accepted Chinese investiture. She contrasts Joseon Korea in which investiture of its king was important to domestic legitimacy against Ashikaga and Tokugawa Japan wherein acceptance of investiture by the shōgun undermined their authority vis-à-vis the daimyō.[44] Furthermore, Inho Choi questions the singular importance of investiture, identifying the role of sociocultural elites forming East Asia's bureaucracies in legitimising the political authority of ruling dynasties autonomously.[45] Likewise, Colin Chia argues the collective beliefs, culture, and norms of East Asia are better understood as legitimising authority by repositioning these social frames rather than through hierarchical delegation. He identifies Vietnamese and Siamese rulers asserting equality or even superiority over China despite simultaneously engaging in hierarchical relations.[46] Although identifying authority's legitimisation

University Press, 2021); Joseph MacKay, "The nomadic other: Ontological security and the Inner Asian steppe in historical East Asian international politics," *Review of International Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 489; Joanna Waley-Cohen, "The new Qing history," *Radical History Review* 88, no. 1 (2004): 199.

[41] Yuan-kang Wang, *Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010: 129-130.

[42] Peter C. Perdue, "The Tenacious Tributary System," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 96 (2015): 1002-1014.

[43] Feng Zhang, "Rethinking the 'Tribute System': Broadening the Conceptual Horizon of Historical East Asian Politics," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2, no. 4 (2009): 547.

[44] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 56-78.

[45] Inho Choi, "Chinese' hegemony from a Korean *shi* perspective: aretocracy in the early modern East Asia," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 22, no. 3 (2022): 348-349.

[46] Colin Chia, "Social Positioning and International Order Contestation in Early Modern Southeast Asia," International Organization 76, no. 2 (2022): 307.

independent of hierarchy, autonomous accounts do not explain their ability to co-exist with delegated understandings.

I expand on both by identifying spatial organisation as the key to explaining how conflicting authorities are managed. Despite conflicting authorities generating tension, East Asian actors established distinct spaces to maintain distance. Here, delegated and autonomous understandings of authority are reconciled through an arrangement allowing simultaneous efforts to become cohesive without convergence. Thus, differences in existing understandings are better understood not as diverging explanations, but rather existing simultaneously within an order ensuring discrete spaces for conflicting authorities.

Spatial Thinking in Early Modern East Asia

Before outlining how this project's theoretical framework understands spatial organisation, I identify its presence in historical East Asian thought and practice. Introducing spatial thinking is a valuable intervention into discussions as alongside laying the groundwork for explaining how hierarchically delegated and autonomously produced authorities could be reconciled, it allays concerns of presentism around the concept of segmentation by demonstrating how historical actors conceived these issues. While the early modern period experienced significant turmoil through interstate conflicts such Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula (1592-1598) and the Ming-Qing transition (1618-1683), actors continued to employ spatial practices to manage order. Despite continuity in spatial thinking, the nature of actors changed across history. How actors understood what constituted legitimate authority and their relationships with others continued to evolve. Indeed, as changes generated contradictory understandings, spatial thinking helped facilitate an inside/outside dynamic accommodating different expressions of authority. I echo Victoria Hui's argument historical Asian IR should not just rely on political thought, but historical practices to develop theoretical insights.[47]

Within East Asian political thought, universal understandings of authority transcended spatial divisions. This is seen in the Chinese term *tianxia* – 'all-under-heaven'. Denoting a universal conception of space, it emphasises none fall outside heaven's jurisdiction and

[47] Victoria Tin-bor Hui, "History and Thought in China's Traditions," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 17, no. 2 (2012): 125-141.

authority.[48] Liu Zehua's account of Chinese intellectual culture stresses no "temporal or spatial limits to the monarch's power" existed in conceiving of their authority as anything less than universal. While falling short of absolutism in practice, with aristocrats and officials often holding de-facto authority, it could not be justified without reference to the Chinese emperor's position.[49] As Mencius states "There are not two Suns in the Heavens. The people do not have two Kings."[50] Hendrik Spruyt contrasts this universality against Westphalian demarcations of 'inside' authority defined by geographic borders and an 'outside' beyond sovereign authority.[51] Other concepts better resemble an inside/outside dynamic, with the *hua-yi* (civilised-barbarian) distinction heterogenizing actors based on their embrace of Chinese Civilization. In practice, East Asian polities rarely identified as 'barbarian', expressing themselves as equals or even superiors reflecting contradictory understandings.[52] Furthermore, Confucianism recognised separate authority relationships within different contexts. Thus, "Within the family, there is father and son; outside the family is ruler and minister" reflects contextual understandings of authority.[53] Later, the *Mengzi* introduces the 'Five Constant Relationships of Confucianism', highlighting different obligations in authority between ruler to ruled, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother, and friend to friend.[54] Nevertheless, conceiving authority in universal terms meant the open presence of competing understandings represented a challenge difficult to reconcile within contemporaneous political thought.

Practices in early modern East Asia render spatial thinking observable through institutions controlling the movement of actors. Considering the tensions around competing authorities, these practices kept contradictions at a distance. Externally, East Asia's maritime controls dictated when, where, and how actors entered ports to conduct trade. While not central to their accounts, IR recognises the importance of restricting trade to incentivising

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[48] Zhao Tingyang, *All under Heaven: The Tianxia System for a Possible World Order*, trans. Joseph E. Harroff (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2021): 2-4.
[49] Liu Zehua, "Monarchism: A Historical Orientation of Chinese Intellectual Culture." *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 45, no. 2-3 (2013): 23.
[50] Mencius "Book 5A4.1," in *Mengzi: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*, trans. Bryan W. Van Norden (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008): 121
[51] Spruyt, *The World Imagined*, 86.
[52] H. Paul Varley, *Japanese Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000): 24; Kathlene Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam: Negotiating Borders in Early Modern Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 5-6; Jeong-Mi Lee, "Chŏson Korea as Sojunghwa, the Small Central Civilization: Sadae kyorin Policy and Relations with Ming/Qing China and Tokugawa Japan in the Seventeenth Century," *Asian Cultural Studies* 36 (2010): 306.
[53] Mencius, "Book 2B2.4," in *Mengzi*, 51.
[54] Mencius, "Book 3A4.8," in *Mengzi*, 71.

recognition of hierarchy by linking access to tribute.[55] Originating with the Ming *haijin* (literally 'sea ban') policy in 1372 and continuing under the Qing, it linked trade to recognition of authority. These controls represent a major departure from pre-modern Chinese dynasties who had maintained a significantly more open trade policy. Over the early modern period, controls formed a cornerstone of order management. While enforcement varied, the Hongwu Emperor's ban proved transformational by linking it to a tributary framework for the first time, managing trade "as an aspect of the universal ruler's ritual relations with the cosmos."[56] Inside the space established through maritime controls, interactions recognised the logic of appropriateness of Chinese authority irrespective of beliefs held outside. Furthermore, maritime controls extended to imposing demands on actors' behaviour at all levels of society. Controls prevented foreign collaboration, provided a cost-effective solution to piracy, restricted the outflow of bullion and other precious metals, and enforced Confucian morality by curtailing the greed associated with trade.[57] At its most extreme during the Ming-Qing transition, edicts in 1661, 1664, and 1679 forcefully evacuated the coasts of Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangnan, and Shandong. Known as *Qiānjiè Lìng* (Great Clearance), this policy isolated the pro-Ming Kingdom of Tungning on Taiwan by depriving them of trade and allies in Southern China.[58] By asserting control over contact with the external world, ruling dynasties in China organised encounters in-line with their authority.

Focusing on maritime controls in early modern East Asia to demonstrate the importance of spatial organisation in order management requires addressing outdated narratives of 'isolationism' existing in older historiography. Two examples of these Western-centric narratives linger in the popular imagination of the period today. First initial depictions of Joseon painted it in starkly Orientalist terms as the 'hermit kingdom' - secretive, mysterious, and above all else, hostile to Western culture and ideas.[59] The term originated in

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[55] Kang, *East Asia Before the West*, 119-120; Feng Zhang, *Chinese Hegemony: Grand Strategy and International Institutions in East Asian History* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015): 95; Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 146-147.

[56] John D. Langlois Jr., "The Hung-wu reign, 1368-1398," Chap. 3 in *The Cambridge History of China Volume 7: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 1*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis C. Twitchett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 168-169, 396.

[57] Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000-1700* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1996): 90; Li Kangying, *The Ming Maritime Policy in Transition, 1368 to 1567* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010): 12, 24-25.

[58] James Hayes, "The Hong Kong Region: Its Place in Traditional Chinese Historiography and Principal Events Since the Establishment of Hsin-An County in 1573," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 14 (1974): 118-119.

[59] Ernest Oppert, *A Forbidden Land: Voyages to the Corea* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1880); William Elliot Griffis, *Corea: The Hermit Nation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889).

an 1881 article for the *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* by William Elliot Griffis which formed the basis for one of the first major Western histories of the peninsula – *Corea: The Hermit Nation*. An educator in Meiji Japan, Griffis never visited Joseon and instead relied on the secondary accounts of Western merchants and missionaries. He states:

> I have never entered "the Corea" as it used to be called, in bodily presence, though often there in thought and study; but then perhaps, no other living foreigners except the Japanese and surviving French missionaries have lived in the inhospitable peninsula.[60]

Today, this sobriquet remains a pejorative used by journalists and politicians in painting North Korea as an isolated 'rogue state' within the contemporary international system by drawing a false continuity with the past. Such narratives ignore Joseon's sustained interactions with its East Asian neighbours across the early modern period.

Second, the term *sakoku* ('Closed Country') represents a similar Western narrative of Tokugawa Japan's isolationism. Depictions of the Tokugawa in popular culture such as James Clavell's *Shōgun* (1975) have fostered an image of a reclusive Japanese society hostile to the world beyond.[61] Similar to Joseon, it identifies the basis of maritime controls towards the West as a product of xenophobia towards Catholic missionaries. These depictions overlook understandable Japanese concerns missionary activity was a smokescreen for European powers to seize on the divisions of the Sengoku ('Warring States') period to sell arms to certain daimyō and establish a political foothold. Similarly, Portugal engaged in a slave trade of Japanese persons drawn largely from prisoners of war and other captives produced by this conflict. Finally, knowledge of the colonisation of the Philippines was reported by British and Dutch traders. Together, these make Japanese hesitancy to engage with European powers more understandable.[62] Although *sakoku* is a Japanese term, it originates in Shizuku Tadao's 1801 translation of German physician Engelbert Kaempfer's

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[60] William Elliot Griffis, "Corea, the Hermit Nation," *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 13 (1881): 125.

[61] Henry Smith, *Learning from Shōgun: Japanese History and Western Fantasy* (Santa Barba: University of California Program in Asian Studies, 1980): xi-xv.

[62] Ronald P. Toby, "Reopening the Question of Sakoku: Diplomacy in the Legitimation of the Tokugawa Bakufu," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 3, no. 2 (1977): 323-327; Lúcio De Sousa, *The Portuguese Slave Trade in Early Modern Japan: Merchants, Jesuits and Japanese, Chinese, and Korean Slaves* (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Michael Laver, *The Dutch East India Company in Early Modern Japan: Gift Giving and Diplomacy* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020): 7.

History of Japan (1727) into Japanese as *Sakoku ron*.[63] This quickly became a shorthand to describe the various maritime controls imposed by the Tokugawa across the course of their rule. Yet these narratives derive from Western experiences in East Asia alone. They overlook Japan's sustained contact with East Asian actors under the Tokugawa. The maritime controls undertaken throughout East Asia demonstrate an international system wherein controlling how encounters took place was central to enforcing authority and establishing order.

Internally, spatial practices extended movement controls over domestic populations to construct order. Doing so facilitated taxation and conscription by holding populations in place and requiring authorisation to move. Control over movement represented "the oldest, longest-lasting Chinese political institutions, the *hukou* system has been in China for at least twenty-five centuries."[64] Alternatively known as *xiangsui* or *baojia* ('mutual responsibility'), the *hukou* system represented an evolving institution of household registration constraining internal migration to maintain cohesion.[65] The *Guanzi* reflects this sentiment:

> Everyone must live in his home village, and within a village, no households are permitted that do not belong to it. Therefore those who would flee have no place to hide, and those who would shift about have no place to stay. Without seeking them, his people may be found; without summoning them, they arrive.[66]

Its emulation and adaptation throughout wider East Asia are seen through the Japanese *koseki seido* and historical antecedents to the Vietnamese *hộ khẩu* systems.[67] Despite the totality of their aims, enforcement varied considerably depending on the effective capabilities of ruling dynasties. While controlling internal movement often only amounted to symbolic acknowledgement of authority at times, the necessity of such acts of recognition nevertheless provided a basis for establishing order.

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[63] Marius B. Jansen, "Japan in the Early Nineteenth Century," Chap. 1 in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 5: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 87-88; Tashiro Kazui, "Foreign Relations during the Edo Period: Sakoku Reexamined," trans. Susan Downing Videen, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 8, no. 2 (1982): 283.

[64] Fei-Ling Wang, *Organizing Through Division and Exclusion: China's Hukou System* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005): 33.

[65] Tiejun Cheng and Mark Selden, "The Origins and Social Consequences of China's Hukou System," *The China Quarterly* 139 (1994): 645; Wang, *Organizing Through Division and Exclusion*, 34.

[66] Guan Zhong, *Guanzi: Political, Economic, and Philosophical Essays from Early China Volume Two*, trans. W. Allyn Rickett (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998): 223.

[67] David Chapman, "Geographies of Self and Other: Mapping Japan through the Koseki," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 9, no. 29 (2011): 1-10; Andrew Hardy, "Rules and Resources: Negotiating the Household Registration System in Vietnam under Reform," *Sojurn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 16, no. 2 (2001): 188-189.

Interaction Rituals and Subjective Understandings

Interaction rituals provide a framework to contrast formal meanings of diplomatic encounters actors against the subjective understandings of participating East Asian actors. They are useful as rather than identify formal meanings establishing appropriate behaviour, interaction rituals focus on participant's actions agnostic to shared beliefs. Participants to interaction rituals consisted of practitioners including diplomats, officials, and intellectuals among others whose expertise reproduced these interaction rituals and determined appropriate conduct. To a lesser extent it incorporates those observing these performances and therefore constituted its audience. Meetings between leaders and/or their diplomatic agents saw their co-presence establish the tenor of relationships. As such, this explains why actors would participate in interaction rituals contradicting their understood status – performances did not need to be believed to convey understandings of order. Here, organising encounters constitutes the mobilisation of actors for a performance. It is a lens to interrogate social phenomena rather than the study of social encounters understood as ritual acts. Consequently, it allows us to interrogate activity at the micro-level as interaction rituals represented the physical, on-the-ground, performance of a narrative. Indeed, the "social and material world is built up from day-to-day practices. The perception of ourselves and our role in society is shaped by daily experience."[68] Mary Beard's study of the Roman Triumph, a ritual procession celebrating and sanctifying the victory of a military commander, highlights the importance of performance. She states:

> The triumph was about display and success – the success of display no less than the display of success…It brought the margins of the Empire to its center, and in so doing celebrated the new geopolitics that victory had brought about.[69]

Moving beyond formal meanings of performances constituting how actors experienced order, I focus on the role of subjective understandings to demonstrate how interaction rituals were contested.

Ritual is an often recognised but under-theorised aspect in accounts of order in early modern East Asia. Scholarship has focused on how interaction rituals reduce ambiguity and

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[68] Tobias L. Kienlin, "Beyond Elites: An Introduction," Vol. 1, In *Beyond elites: Alternatives to hierarchical systems in modelling social formations*, eds. Tobias L. Kienlin and Andreas Zimmerman (Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 2012): 18.

[69] Mary Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007): 31-32.

confirm the identity of actors within a relationship. Jorg Kustermans highlights the ambiguity for both superordinate and subordinate within a hierarchical relationship, requiring the mobilisation of actors through acts of gift-giving that constitute the physical acts confirming their identities.[70] Similarly, Ji-Young Lee employs ritual in the context of the Ming dynasty's investiture of Joseon's rulers, highlighting its role in managing expectations through ongoing performances by both actors that reconfirmed their commitment to the material and normative status quo.[71] Focusing on how rituals confirm shared understanding of status between actors leaves subjective understandings associated with participation underexplored. The presence of a shared 'civilizational heritage' and the mutual intelligibility of diplomatic practices in early modern East Asia did not produce consensus over status.

For early modern East Asia, shared civilizational heritage produced broad consensus on the appropriate form interaction rituals structuring formal diplomacy took place on. This can be seen in how practitioner knowledge was produced in the early modern period. The scholar-officials of East Asia all required comprehensive knowledge of the Neo-Confucian canon established by Zhu Xi (1130-1200). From 1313, the Four Books consisting of the *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, the *Analects*, and the *Mencius* based on Zhu Xi's commentary socialised them into a particular worldview as they formed the basis of the civil service examinations recruiting them.[72] Indeed, "Just as knowledge of the Bible among literate people was assumed in Europe in medieval and early modern times, so was knowledge of the Four Books assumed in China."[73] Furthermore, 'foreign relations' in this period were overseen by a Ministry of Rites as part of their purview for ensuring the proper conduct of rituals and ceremonies.[74] While not holding civil service examinations, Japanese officials nevertheless engaged with Neo-Confucian scholarship.[75] While not producing religious conflict on the scale of Christianity in European history, Neo-Confucianism failed to produce consensus over status and often conflicted with alternative belief systems, particularly Buddhism. Appropriating these ideologies saw them operationalised to support

[70] Kustermans, "Gift-giving as a Source of International Authority," 401-403.
[71] Ji-Young Lee, "Diplomatic Ritual as a Power Resource: The Politics of Asymmetry in Early Modern Chinese-Korean Relations," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013): 310-311.
[72] Daniel K. Gardner, *Zhu Xi's Reading of the Analects: Canon, Commentary, and the Classical Tradition* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2003): 2-3.
[73] Daniel K. Gardner, *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007): xv.
[74] Charles O. Hucker, "Governmental Organization of The Ming Dynasty," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 21 (1958): 33-35.
[75] Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Moral and Spiritual Cultivation in Japanese Neo-Confucianism: The Life and Thought of Kaibara Ekken (1630-1740)* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989).

the competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas of East Asian orders in practice. Shared culture did not preclude allowing "surrounding peoples and polities to contest, modify, and adapt Chinese ideas to their own ends".[76] Concepts such as a mimetic challenge saw normative "principles and purposes" internalised and re-expressed to challenge the superordinate actor's position".[77] Beyond Confucianism, other ideologies informed East Asia's interaction rituals. Daoist, Buddhist, and Shamanist beliefs informed East Asian interaction rituals. Furthermore, local spirit cults and traditions such as ancestor worship were also employed.[78] With a diverse base of ideologies to draw on and repurpose to legitimise their authority, the potential for disagreement over meaning becomes apparent.

While IR has focused on formal meanings and the identities created within interaction rituals, subjective understandings at odds with performances have not received comparable investigation. In their ideal form, interaction rituals stabilise expectations and establish actors' status and identity in relation to one another.[79] Yet treating rituals as having an *a priori* understanding is at odds with how scholarship in adjacent disciplines understand how interaction rituals are experienced.[80] Indeed, for IR what "has only recently been more fully acknowledged, however, is that there is regularly a flipside to this integrative function: rituals do also, more often than not, create social tensions and conflict."[81] Their subjective experiences are comparable to Roland Barthes 'Death of the Author' in criticising assigning a singular meaning to a text and fixating on authorial intent in its composition.[82] As seen in his reading of the novella *Sarrasine*, Barthes emphasises the plurality of interpretations attached to it, highlighting that to "interpret a text is not to give it a… meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what plural constitutes it… the text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds".[83] Such understandings extend to interaction rituals as a visual medium. The

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[76] Kang, *East Asia Before the West*, 25.
[77] Shogo Suzuki, "The agency of subordinate polities: Western hegemony in the East Asian mirror," in *Everyday Politics of the World Economy*, eds. John M. Hobson and Leonard Seabrooke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 178-180.
[78] Evelyn S. Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-Border Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 105-107.
[79] Lee, "Diplomatic Ritual as a Power Resource," 309-336; Kustermans, "Gift-giving as a Source of International Authority," 395-426.
[80] Adam B. Seligman, Robert P. Weller, Michael J. Puett and Bennett Simon, *Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 20.
[81] Stephane J. Baele and Thierry Balzacq, "International rituals: An analytical framework and its theoretical repertoires," *Review of International Studies* 48, no. 1 (2022): 10.
[82] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," Chap. 25 in *Twentieth-Century Literary Theory*, ed. K.M. Newton (London: Palgrave, 1997): 121-122.
[83] Roland Barthes, *S/Z: An Essay*, trans. Richard Miller (Hoboken, New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing, 1974): 5-6.

display of these performances are shaped by the aesthetics surrounding their composition, with political reality only coming into being "through the process of representation. A political event… cannot determine from what perspective and in what context it is seen."[84] Meanings of these performances remain context dependent, with attempts provide a settled definition not possible.[85] At its most extreme, Roger Keesing warns against assuming rituals have a shared understanding of their formal meaning, noting many hold only superficial understandings and the idea of deeper significance for participants cannot be assumed in all cases despite ongoing performances.[86] Even as actors agreed upon or sought to impose formal meanings to ensure settled performances, interaction rituals are sites of contestation in light of their subjective understandings.

As a result of their subjective nature, interaction rituals produce different experiences for participating actors. While ideal-type depictions of interaction rituals treat them as stabilising relations between actors while confirming understandings of status and identity, in practice these purposes could often find themselves at odds which results in different experiences for participants. For example, Randall Collins notes a diverse range of interaction ritual types ranging from successful to empty, forced, and failed that highlight how performances can produce different experiences.[87] Actors endure this situation as material security is prioritised over ontological security. Indeed, it is difficult for actors to not take part in interaction rituals as the omnipresence of formal diplomatic protocol and choreographed encounters between leaders and/or their diplomatic agents constitute 'thick' structures in the international system. Historically, pre- and early modern societies placed greater controls over 'captured populations' who found it difficult to escape interaction rituals structuring everyday life and formalising unequal socials bonds.[88] Consequently, non-participation is a costly and destabilising move in a relationship as actors choose to endure these performances.[89] The potential for experiences at odds with the ontological security of an

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[84] Roland Bleiker, "The Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (2001): 512.
[85] Roland Bleiker, "Pluralist Methods for Visual Global Politics," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 3 (2015): 873.
[86] Roger M. Keesing, "On not understanding symbols: Toward an anthropology of incomprehension," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 2 (2012): 406-407.
[87] Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004): 50-53.
[88] Randall Collins, "Interaction ritual chains and collective effervescence," in *Collective Emotions: Perspectives from Psychology, Philosophy, and Sociology*, eds. Christian von Scheve and Mikko Salmela (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 302.
[89] Erika Summers-Effler, "The Micro Potential for Social Change: Emotion, Consciousness, and Social Movement Formation," *Sociological Theory* 20, no. 1 (2002): 41-60.

actor results in efforts to mitigate these threats. This accounts for interaction rituals being sites of contestation and is most clearly seen in acts imposing particular understandings. As Anne Bogart highlights, efforts to direct a performance can be considered an act of violence by eliminating possibilities. Employing a dramaturgical metaphor, she argues placing

> a chair at a particular angle on the stage destroys every other possible choice, every other option. When an actor achieves a spontaneous, intuitive or passionate moment in rehearsal, the director utters the fateful words 'keep it'… These two cruel words, 'keep it', plunge a knife into the heart of the actor who knows that the next attempt to re-create that result will be false, affected and lifeless.[90]

In place of ambiguity and spontaneity, actors attempt to restrain subjective understandings by aligning performances with their interpretations. It ensures the same performance is repeated and prevents deviation. As interaction rituals did not occur in a vacuum, the ability to dictate what is 'appropriate' was not arbitrary but reflected (albeit not identically) the entrenched social norms of a given system. These social frameworks define appropriate interactions, providing background knowledge that actors use to inform how they express themselves through their agency.[91] By juxtaposing formal meanings of interaction rituals against subjective understandings, my project identifies underlying tensions hidden beneath the veneer of stability.

Argument

I argue that an underexplored spatial dimension explains how actors legitimised the authorities of their competing order-building projects and allowed them to co-exist despite their mutually exclusive claims. Its necessity results from the intersection of rival order-building projects in early modern East Asia. Each actor sought to organise relations with others along hierarchical lines and position themselves at the apex of their own order. Unsurprisingly, these occurred on separate organising logics – the competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas of actors. These are observable in the interaction rituals at the micro-level constituting the social relationships distinct to particular locations that informed how hierarchy was experienced. I term the outcome polycentric hierarchy – a heterarchical formation in which multiple actors pursue competing efforts, working to

[90] Anne Bogart, *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2001): 45.
[91] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986): 22.

contest, accommodate, adjudicate, and otherwise manage one another's efforts to construct hierarchy.[92] The capabilities of East Asian actors to enact these orders were not equal as differences in military, economic, and normative power constrained their ability to organise relations with others on their terms. Nevertheless, the absence of a shared organising logic produced ongoing tension as hierarchical orders intersected. In light of their mutually exclusive claims, the necessity of taking on different identities within distinct orders threatened ontological security even as it stabilised material security. These contradictions could not exist openly and required a process managing the resulting tensions.

To explain how polycentric hierarchy endured across early modern East Asia, I put forward the segmentation of space as an explanation. This refers to a set of interconnected spaces facilitating the expression of the competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas organising relations between actors on a logic of appropriateness specific to particular locations.[93] Occurring on an inside/outside dynamic, these allowed for both hierarchically delegated and autonomously produced understandings of authority to be separated. Here, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese rulers could legitimise the authority of their orders by organising interactions inside on their own terms agnostic to competing efforts elsewhere. Conversely, on the outside they could maintain hierarchical relations with ruling dynasties in China or other East Asian rulers despite standing at odds with their order-building projects. Thus, I focus on the practices establishing boundaries between them and how it allowed contradictory authorities to exist in particular spaces while being absent elsewhere. In doing so, it reconciles both hierarchically delegated and autonomously produced accounts of authority within the same theoretical framework. Controlling interaction rituals in a particular time and place allowed the performance of contradictory interaction rituals to be kept at a distance. While efforts to situate these competing order-building projects within distinct spaces explains the endurance of order, it does not fully capture how encounters between them could be facilitated when differences produced tension. Although separated, these actors could not exist in isolation from one another.

Performance strategies managed inevitable tensions when mutually exclusive claims risked open acknowledgement during the performance of interaction rituals. Although

[92] Donnelly, "Rethinking political structures," 49-86.
[93] Segmentation has been used earlier by Jack Donnelly in a different context. It refers to a form of horizontal differentiation cutting across rank distinctions in the international system and has no relation to how I use this term in my account. Jack Donnelly, "Rethinking political structures: from 'ordering principles' to 'vertical differentiation' – and beyond," *International Theory* 1, no. 1 (2009): 71.

segmentation compartmentalises interaction rituals within distinct spaces, juxtaposition between formal meanings and subjective understandings meant actors remained unhappy with the status or identity conveyed in performances despite occurring elsewhere. Therefore, actors intervened within interaction rituals at the micro-level to ensure performances reflect their macro-level structural concerns around status. I outline four performance strategies explaining how actors manage interaction rituals at the micro-level – confrontation, accommodation, manipulation, and avoidance. These are situated on two axes. First, performance strategies are classified as covert or overt. This identifies the degree strategies are observable. Second, performance strategies are classified as benign or malign. This identifies an actor's attitude when attempting to alter performances of interaction rituals. Confrontation openly challenges how an interaction ritual is performed. Accommodation openly seeks compromises around the performance of an interaction ritual in the interest of all participants. Manipulation changes a performance and consequent meaning of interaction rituals without openly acknowledging this. Avoidance demonstrates an actor removing themselves from a performance or certain aspects of it without jeopardising the interaction ritual. This was critical as while material security was prioritised over ontological security, performance strategies allowed actors to mitigate threats to identity. Role-distancing allowed actors to remove the stigma of disagreeable performances. Alternatively, it could also be used to enforce a particular understanding and prevent deviation from protocol. It allows us to better capture tensions hidden beneath the surface of ongoing interaction rituals which existing accounts in IR have not done so far.

Consequently, this project explains how stability is preserved across early modern East Asia despite the inconsistency (and even hypocrisy) between diplomatic speech expressed in the myriad encounters occurring throughout the system every day. Order was a goal rarely achieved in total with any durability. Instead, ongoing management of disagreement and conflict did no more in the long run than render sources of instability chronic. As will be discussed in the penultimate chapter in greater detail, this period saw the system destabilise and restabilise itself on several occasions. Key to this process was the promotion of ambiguity around the claims made by rival order-building projects through specific strategies. As actors jostled for their subjective understandings against the formal meanings of rituals, segmentation deliberately accentuated ambiguity by situating performances in distinct spaces allowing actors to wilfully turn a blind eye to contradictory

performances. As such, it explains how differences between rival order-building projects could be managed, but never resolved.

Methodology

To demonstrate my argument, I employ the following methodology. First, I outline the abductive methodology guiding the research of this project. Doing so allows for a balance between abstract theorising removed from the historical case and risks of 'cherry-picking' evidence to confirm arguments specific to this period. It allows the theoretical framework to 'travel' and speak to IR more widely. Second, I outline the underexplored case studies of the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects to compare their similarities and differences. Here, I assess the level of departure from Sinocentric accounts and evaluate their relative success in establishing their own hierarchies. To do so, I outline their vision of order, basis for segmentation, and illustrate two sub-cases in which they sought to incorporate or resist incorporation into other order-building projects. Third, I demonstrate how process tracing interrogates interaction rituals structuring relations between actors. Focusing on the embassies dispatched between actors constituting formal diplomatic conduct shows how performance strategies managed their composition, mobilisation, and presentation as embassies travelled between different spaces. Fourth, I identify the tensions between formal meanings and subjective understandings in the narratives actors produced when interpreting these rituals. This captures how performances are therefore symptomatic of wider tensions.

My project employs an abductive methodology to evaluate the claims it puts forward. This contrasts with the expectations of an inductive approach for a historical project in locating relevant evidence. However, the risk of 'cherry-picking' evidence to serve my case leads to this project incorporating a theoretical framework that can be applied for the purpose of analysis. Nevertheless, this deductive approach carries risks of presentism in applying a contemporary theoretical framework on a past that did not conceive of their world in these terms. Thus, I take a pragmatic approach in guiding research and generating insight. Pragmatism takes individual or collective action as the starting point of theorisation.[94] An abductive approach is useful as efforts to generate theory based on "incontrovertible foundations of scientific knowledge" are near impossible, while a reverse trend of seeking the epistemological foundations of knowledge has produced scholarship that is contextual in the

[94] Gunther Hellmann, "Pragmatism and International Relations," *International Studies Review* 11, no. 3 (2009): 639.

knowledge it produces.[95] Abductive reasoning, also known as abduction, distinguishes itself in the following ways. It refers to an intermediate level of theorising that does not "impose an abstract theoretical template… or "simply" inferring propositions from facts".[96] Explanations generated reason from a set of observations by going "beyond what we have observed in order to posit something that plausibly accounts for what we have observed".[97] It is associated with "creative, associative or problem-solving dimensions" associated with generating new insights.[98] Put simply, it allows a project focused on a specific period in historical Asian IR to generate insights that contribute not just to discussions within the case itself, but are able to travel and provide insight into wider debates in IR.

The cases selected for this project demonstrate how rival hierarchies operated in early modern East Asia. I focus on what I term the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects. I centre the ruling dynasties as the driving force of these endeavours. Indeed, it was the Tokugawa bakufu, Yi dynasty in Joseon, and the Lê and Nguyễn dynasties of Đại Việt that situated themselves at the apex of their own hierarchies. Employing contextual rather than contemporary names better reflects the perceptions of actors and avoids presentism in acknowledging national identities as historically contingent. I justify their selection as follows. First, it decentres Chinese hierarchies from discussions of order in this period. Second, identifying ruling dynasties rather than states as driving order building avoids imposing an anachronistic state-centric lens on the past.[99] Doing so is critical as it makes it easier to observe a greater diversity of actors at all levels of the system otherwise obscured by a contemporary state-centric view. Third, each actor falls within East Asia's cultural sphere through a shared ideological, institutional, and linguistic heritage. Therefore, highlighting contestation is more revealing. While there is risk in using similar cases to generate

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[95] Jörg Friedrichs and Friedrich Kratochwil, "On Acting and Knowing: How Pragmatism Can Advance International Relations Research and Methodology," *International Organization* 63, no. 4 (2009): 701-702.
[96] Friedrichs and Kratochwil, "On Acting and Knowing," 709.
[97] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (London: Routledge, 2010): 82-83.
[98] Ulrich Franke and Ralph Weber, "At the Papini hotel: On pragmatism in the study of international relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 4 (2011): 673.
[99] In focusing on the ruling dynasties of East Asia as pursuing distinct order-building projects I draw on the precedent set by Ayşe Zarakol. Her work describes the major actors within the Eurasian world order as 'Great Houses' and is in turn inspired by the scholarship of Edward Keene and David Sneath. This approach avoids transposing European concepts onto polities whose form in the early modern period did not fully mirror actors in the modern international system. Ayşe Zarakol, *Before the West: The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): 222-223; Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); David Sneath, *The Headless State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

theoretical claims as shared characteristics lead to confirmatory results, these similarities are more revealing when explaining different outcomes.[100]

I assess these cases based on their likelihood to pursue order independent of reference to the Chinese emperor as well as the relative success of their efforts. Consequently, I stratify each case as falling into the categories of 'most-likely' to 'least-likely'.[101] Tokugawa Japan represents the 'most-likely' to position their authority claims independent of reference to China's ruling dynasty. Indeed, Japan's *shinkoku* ('Divine Land') ideology provided a distinct normative agenda on which to legitimise it. Positioned across the sea on the Japanese archipelago, its distance from China saw the Tokugawa most successful in incorporating neighbouring actors within their hierarchical order in East Asia. Joseon represents a 'least-likely' case as internalisation of Neo-Confucian beliefs produced unique alignment with the Ming and saw their authority claims in part legitimised through investiture. Nevertheless, a distinct order can be seen in the efforts to organise Japanese and Jurchen actors at all levels of the system at odds with other rulers. Yet over the course of this period the Qing conquest of China and Tokugawa unification of Japan saw the Joseon order decline significantly. Đại Việt represents a middle-range case as while emulation of Chinese thought and practice occurred, memories of historical conquest produced conflicting currents of admiration and apprehension. Complicating matters is the existence of competing Đại Việt orders who maintained competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas. Furthermore, the centrality of territorial expansion to Đại Việt orders represented a significant departure from the other cases but accounted for their brief but eventual success in constructing their own hierarchy.

Each case study in this project is designed in the following way to demonstrate how contestation between each order-building project is managed. I cover a roughly five-hundred-year period stretching from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries, using the arrival of Western imperialism as a significant force as the cut-off. Indeed, a further chapter details the breakdown of East Asian order as a whole, pointing to the incapability of existing forms of order management to reconcile with Western powers. Therefore, this project reflects a longitudinal comparison, namely in that it explores a small group of cases similar in all

[100] Sidney Tarrow, "The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice," *Comparative Political Studies* 43, no. 2 (2010): 249.
[101] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005): 120-123.

respects (for the purposes of analysis), focusing on a before and after comparison to ensure the internal validity of the cases being researched.[102] To demonstrate this contestation, I structure each case on the following lines. First, I establish the historical context of a particular order-building project. This allows us to trace where an actor's vision of order arises by looking at how shared institutional models and ideological systems were appropriated to service their authority claims and normative agenda. Second, I establish the institutional basis for the segmentation of space. I focus on how maritime controls and controls over movement and conduct were adapted by ruling dynasties. This established a logic of appropriateness and demands on behaviour unique to each space. Third, I explore how a particular order incorporated participants. Here, I focus on the embassy missions constituting formal diplomacy between actors. Framing these as interaction rituals, I outline their composition, mobilisation, and presentation. To do so, I explore how each hierarchy incorporated two neighbouring actors into their order within a particular space by receiving these embassies. Fourth, I outline the performance strategies employed by actors to contest understandings of identity at the micro-level of international life. Actors employed these to alter interaction rituals to enforce particular understandings inside their space or resist incorporation into contradictory performances outside. The fact these cases are not just similar but intimately related and overlapping reinforces the importance of managing contradictions to stabilising wider East Asian order.

Process tracing allows this project to explore the dynamics of interaction rituals structuring relations between actors. A major component of each case study will be tracing the composition, mobilisation, and presentation of the embassies taking part in these performances. This allows us to juxtapose formal meanings against subjective understandings by establishing an ideal understanding of the expectations of an interaction ritual and consequently highlight deviation from this. In this sense, we "see mechanisms as delimited sorts of events that change relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations."[103] This reflects how causal mechanisms should be treated as "more than just intervening variables but instead are viewed as a system of interacting parts that transfers causal forces from causes to outcomes."[104] It forces cases to

[102] John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 153.
[103] Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilley, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 25
[104] Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pederson, "Selecting Appropriate Cases When Tracing Causal Mechanisms," *Sociological Methods & Research* 47, no. 4 (2018): 839.

account for their outcomes by going through and tracing how cause led to effect. Doing so prevents it from making generalisations. The simplicity of this approach in which "causal effects are transmitted through linking processes of one kind or another" is key to a qualitative case study approach, as the ability to demonstrate the presence of a causal effect or not is central to demonstrating my argument.[105] In-line with the middle-range ambitions of this project, tracing the performance of interaction rituals is possible through 'practice tracing', which by following practices themselves creates accounts situating social causality locally, but nevertheless produces general insights from analysis.[106] Processes can remain situated within their specific contexts without preventing insights speaking to more general theorisation and other contexts.[107]

Exploring the contradictory narratives around interaction rituals allows this project to juxtapose their formal meanings against subjective understandings. This provides a window into a particular socio-historical moment and how a particular actor perceived and understood the wider context they inhabited.[108] These narratives sustain a particular worldview associated with order. In the face of complexities around the nature of their relationships, these narratives serve "as an effective means of simplifying complex situations".[109] For a sub-field placing considerable focus on locating convergence around norms and institutions, dominant narratives have an unintended effect of focusing attention away from points of tension.[110] I differentiate the understandings of rival order-building projects through the performances of interaction rituals. Alongside interpreting the meanings behind contestation around performances, I identify how mutually exclusive interpretations among participants were communicated after the fact.[111] As an interpretivist approach to research, clarity on how evidence will be used to demonstrate claims is essential.[112] Looking at tensions between formal meanings and subjective understandings requires us to acknowledge "our reception of

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[105] Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012): 100-101.
[106] Vincent Pouliot, "Practice Tracing," in *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, ed. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 237.
[107] Pouliot, "Practice Tracing," 237-238.
[108] Corinne Squire et al. *What is Narrative Research?* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014): 84-87.
[109] Shaul R. Shenhav, "Political Narratives and Political Reality," *International Political Science Review* 27, no. 3 (2006): 246.
[110] Jennifer Milliken, "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research Methods," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 2 (1999): 230-231.
[111] Shenhav, "Political Narratives and Political Reality," 254-255.
[112] Donald E. Polkinghorne, "Validity Issues in Narrative Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 13, no. 4 (2007): 483-484.

it would involve an almost infinite motion of consciousness from one viewpoint to the next… we would find ourselves caught in a kind of endless spatial movement from one perspective to another."[113] This allows my project to address criticisms of 'infinite reflexivity' associated with interpretivist approaches and demonstrate its ability to remain grounded.[114] Consequently, this understanding guides how I will explore interaction rituals forming sites of contestation in distinct spaces.

Evidence selected to demonstrate my claims falls in-line with expectations of a historical IR project. As alluded to throughout this section, I draw on a range of sources to demonstrate this project's claims. Thus, in gathering empirical evidence, this project has identified primary historical texts alongside visual culture as providing the means to demonstrate that acts of ritual manipulation took place. Complimenting this is the use of secondary historical scholarship which allows for a comprehensive overview of different aspects of this period. To a lesser extent, shared philosophical texts familiar to practitioners at the time are referenced to identify their ideal understanding of political order and how conduct between actors should occur. A limitation of this project is the absence of fluency in Classical Chinese, the lingua franca of formal writing in both diplomatic correspondence and historical records. Nevertheless, these issues are not insurmountable to the project's viability. At its core, this is not a project of history seeking to generate new historiographical understandings of a period, but a work of International Relations seeking to use historical cases to generate new theoretical insights on order. In light of the visual dimension of this project, I compliment this with insights from art theory. I draw on Gillian Rose who identifies three sites at which the meaning of an image is made, the site of its production, the site of an image itself, and the site where audiences see it.[115] As interaction rituals constitute a visual medium, this reflects how I employ process tracing to map the performances of interaction rituals through embassies. From here, it is possible to compare different order-building projects.

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[113] Shenhav, "Political Narratives and Political Reality," 248.
[114] Ian Parker, *Discourse dynamics: Critical analysis for social and individual psychology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992): 4.
[115] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Methods* (London: SAGE Publishing, 2001): 16-17.

Plan of the Dissertation

Chapter Two provides a more detailed account of this project's theoretical framework. Its purpose is to highlight that hierarchical order itself does not explain early modern East Asia's stability, but rather its endurance is something that requires explanation. I begin by reframing East Asian order as a polycentric rather than monocentric hierarchy as it has been depicted in existing accounts in IR. While not all hierarchies were of equivalent strength, this framework allows for all East Asia' order-building projects to be captured. Furthermore, as a heterarchical formation without a shared organising logic, it captures the tensions of competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas operating simultaneously. Following from this, I introduce spatial organisation as a solution to how rival order-building projects co-existed over the long-term without converging on shared understandings. Segmentation of space established boundaries between physical locations, whether de-jure or de-facto, in which separate logics of appropriateness and demands on behaviour were established within. Dictating when, where, and how encounters took place allowed for an inside/outside dynamic to emerge. Actors maintained autonomously produced understandings with themselves at the centre on the inside while acknowledging hierarchically delegated understandings on the outside at odds with this. This separation was critical as it minimises contact and hides contradictions between them. Nevertheless, complete separation was impossible, with interaction rituals structuring relations between them forming points of contestation around identity as they were performed in distinct spaces and confirmed the prevailing understanding of order. While these could be performed successfully without genuine belief, performance strategies allowed actors to mitigate participation in interaction rituals contradicting their understanding through role-distancing. Thus, while taking place at the micro-level, interventions into their performance by ruling dynasties highlighted their significance to establishing order.

From Chapters Three to Five, I explore each case study in turn. I establish how each actor pursued their distinct order-building projects before evaluating their effectiveness in doing so. Chapter Three examines the Tokugawa order-building project. It argues not only was it the most-likely to pursue its own 'Japan-centric' hierarchy but was also the most successful in achieving this. Centering their authority in *shinkoku* ideology, the Tokugawa not only avoided acknowledging the hierarchies of successive dynasties in China but incorporated both Japanese and foreign actors through a combination of diplomatic and

military efforts. Chapter Four continues by exploring the Joseon order-building project. Despite being the least-likely to pursue its own hierarchy, I argue that Joseon was driven by a desire to maintain its own order centred on the belief it constituted the *Sojunghwa* (Small Central Civilization) and last bastion of Confucian propriety in East Asia. Nevertheless, with the unification of the Jurchens culminating in the Qing dynasty and the Tokugawa's consolidation of power in Japan, Joseon found itself enclosed and consequently saw the extent of its order decline. Chapter Five concludes by exploring the Đại Việt order-building projects. I employ the plural to argue competing polities shared the 'Vietnamese' identity prior to Đại Việt's unification in the early nineteenth century. This departs from existing accounts in IR treating 'Vietnam' in this period as singular. As such, order was constructed in varying manners. Vietnamese polities in the north employed the language of Confucianism in dealing with East Asia. In contrast, their southern counterparts employed Buddhism to legitimise their position to both their subjects and in diplomacy with Southeast Asian polities. More so than the Tokugawa or Joseon, conquest was central to Đại Việt orders as expansion eliminated rival polities and incorporated their populations on Vietnamese terms. Removed from a singular focus on their relationship with China, the Đại Việt order-building projects proved successful in carving out a distinct hierarchy.

Chapter Six outlines instances wherein polycentric East Asian order broke down. This reinforces the central claim of this project around the importance of segmentation to managing order. I attribute this breakdown to the loss of ritual efficacy in structuring relations and a consequent desire for revision that could not be reconciled with existing orders. Such a breakdown occurred at three instances in early modern East Asia – Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula, the Ming-Qing transition, and the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. Each represented an attempt at revision within the system. Yet, whereas the first two resulted in East Asian actors returning to segmentation to manage their competing hierarchies, this was not the case with its final breakdown in the nineteenth century. Here, hierarchy as an organising logic became further entrenched as seen in the establishment of treaty ports, the imposition of extraterritoriality and conquest of certain East Asian polities and their establishment as colonies. Key to this was the elimination of segmentation as a strategy for managing order as hierarchy in East Asia became far more intrusive for China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam than it had been at any point in the early modern period.

Chapter Seven, the concluding chapter, explains the value of introducing a spatial dimension to our understanding of order in early modern East Asia. It highlights the key findings of this project in its exploration of the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects and how the polycentric hierarchy their competing efforts produced endured. Centering East Asia's maritime controls and movement restrictions as the subject of inquiry allows us to move beyond hierarchy and explain how competing authorities could co-exist through spatial organisation. Furthermore, I bring the contested nature of interaction rituals to the fore and demonstrate how tensions between formal meanings and subjective understandings were managed through performance strategies. I conclude by elaborating on further avenues for research this project opens that extend beyond this period.

Conclusion

This project advances knowledge by making three contributions to debates not only within the subfield of historical Asian IR but wider theoretical discussions around how actors managed their relationships to sustain order. First, I move beyond Sinocentric understandings of the early modern period and provide a more holistic account of East Asia. I provide an account of the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects and how they managed the tensions arising from competing efforts. Second, I introduce segmentation as the major contribution of this project. In relation to historical Asian IR, it reconciles competing accounts of authority being legitimised through hierarchical delegation or autonomous production within the same framework. More broadly, it allows us to use historical East Asian thought and practice to question assumptions around how authority operates today. Third, I expand discussions around how interaction rituals structuring relations between actors are experienced. Here, I identify the juxtaposition between formal meanings produced by an ideal type derived from a shared 'civilizational heritage' and the subjective understandings of East Asian rulers surrounding their status. This juxtaposition and the performance strategies used to manage resulting tensions extend well beyond the case itself and are locatable in the international system more broadly.

First, by exploring the order-building projects of Japan, Korea, and Vietnam's early modern counterparts, I contribute new knowledge in not only providing a holistic account of East Asia by illustrating these hierarchies, but showing how they are managed. IR struggles to reconcile the predominance of successive hierarchical orders established by Chinese dynasties with comparative efforts by other East Asian rulers. While never as successful as

those of the Ming and Qing, how these competing orders maintained themselves despite harbouring competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas is not easily explained. Arguments downplaying the tensions of competing hierarchies emphasise the continuity of interaction rituals establishing authority relationships between Chinese emperors and East Asian rulers. Alternatively, they note their small size put them beneath the notice of Chinese order-building projects. Both are plausible. Yet, these do not explain the process through which distinct East Asian orders reconciled themselves with one another. Rather than explore how East Asian rulers managed relations with their Chinese counterparts, I identify both similarities and differences in how they sought to organise relations with others on their terms. As such, the ability to illustrate how the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt orders operated and how they managed relations with one another widens our understandings of this period.

Second, segmentation of space offers a significant contribution to discussions on the management of order both within historical Asian IR and the wider discipline. It responds to the need for historical Asian IR to move beyond hierarchy when discussing how order in this period is managed by demonstrating how conflicting authorities can co-exist indefinitely without converging on shared understandings. Segmentation managed interactions between spaces and the authorities conveyed within by keeping them at a distance rather than seeking to reconcile differences. While contradictions are well established, early modern East Asia provides an example of how tensions could be managed over the long term. Furthermore, it highlights that while autonomy remained a key goal for actors, of equivalent importance was the desire to express a multifaceted understanding of authority on their own terms to the extent possible. Despite the mutual exclusivity of the authority claims and normative agendas, I demonstrate through this framework how resulting tensions were managed by an inside/outside dynamic. For contemporary IR, segmentation provides a unique example for how competing authorities can be reconciled in both thought and practice.

Third, the importance of interaction rituals in explaining the dynamics between East Asian rulers serves as another contribution of this project. As this project will demonstrate, interaction rituals do not necessarily produce a singular meaning for participants but carried subjective understandings simultaneously. The potential for competing demands on material and ontological security within interaction rituals complicates our perception of these as generating stability. While IR reveals how interaction rituals explain the establishment of identity in these encounters without shared beliefs, comparatively little attention is dedicated

to how actors experience performances. To explain how these encounters are managed, I introduce four performance strategies managing participation – confrontation, accommodation, manipulation, and avoidance. These are situated on two axes – benign-malign and overt-covert. Doing so expands on the potential for interaction rituals to explain stable relationships without shared beliefs, but also how these endure despite indifference or hostility. Furthermore, this provides a useful perspective as since interaction rituals are sites of power politics, performance strategies provide a dynamic account of how they play out in practice. While these understandings are drawn from the case of early modern East Asia, they speak more broadly to how interaction rituals are understood within IR.

Chapter Two – Theoretical Framework

Having established this project's argument, I outline the theoretical framework utilised to explain how competing order-building projects in early modern East Asia co-existed despite tensions. Here, I explain the specific mechanisms managing the competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas of rival order-building projects whose intersection produced polycentric hierarchy. By positioning spatial organisation at the heart of this framework, I show how actors could legitimise their authority through hierarchical delegation and autonomous production simultaneously. Segmentation offers the clearest example of this dynamic – purposely separating various East Asian orders to minimise encounters bringing contradicting visions to the fore. When encounters between orders did occur, framing diplomatic relations as interaction rituals juxtaposes their formal meaning and subjective understandings. Friction can be seen arising at the micro-level as the dispositions of actors are revealed and subject to performance strategies seeking to either impose their understandings on rituals or engage in role distancing to offset this. Thus, the theoretical framework situates contestation between actors underneath the veneer of stability at the centre of inquiry. Actors avoided convergence on shared understandings as the outcome of contestation. Instead, focus is on how tensions were managed on an ongoing basis which allowed rival order-building projects to endure.

Through the Tokugawa, Joseon and Đại Việt order-building projects, I demonstrate how management was an ongoing process. By considering actors consigned to secondary positions in accounts of this period, I capture a greater degree of contestation than existing accounts. For early modern East Asia, it is not enough to consider the relationship of actors to ruling dynasties in China alone, but rather their own simultaneous efforts to construct hierarchical order. This greater range of perspectives moves IR away from Sinocentric accounts in both theory and practice, instead producing a more holistic vision of early modern East Asian order. Furthermore, treating all these order-building projects as operating simultaneously, I establish new mechanisms explaining how such a formation remained durable. This is revealed by identifying the management of tensions on a day-to-day basis. Rather than provide an account of how these rival order-building projects were reconciled, I instead show how ongoing management provided the basis for stability. As such, I identify what drove actors to maintain relationships in this manner as well as how they broke down.

This chapter proceeds as follows. In the first section, I outline my understanding of East Asian order in the early modern period as a polycentric hierarchy. Rather than a monocentric vision centred on China, my account argues East Asia is better conceived of as polycentric considering the competing order-building projects that intersected in their respective efforts to construct hierarchy. These contradictions are observable in the micro-level diplomatic encounters between actors that together comprise this formation. Resting on competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas, the resulting tensions meant actors could only manage, but never resolve, underlying differences inherent in this formation. Rather than converge on a singular organising logic structuring relations, each order-building project sought to organise relations based on their understanding of status.

In the second section, I introduce the segmentation of space to explain how actors managed competing order-building projects. They did so by bounding particular locations and enforced their logic of appropriateness within. This explains how the hierarchically delegated and autonomously produced understandings of authority within distinct orders could exist simultaneously. Here, separating different hierarchical orders and ensuring contradictions around status were hidden was achieved by actors dictating when, where, and how encounters took place within their space. Doing so produced a logic of appropriateness specific to a space and allowed actors to enforce demands on behaviour within that saw others comply with their vision of order in practice. I identify the context in which segmentation occurred and how technological limitations in surpassing the physical geography of East Asia facilitated this. This produced ambiguity which actors propagated by controlling movement in a manner that prevented contradictions from being openly acknowledged. As a result, it produced an inside/outside dynamic allowing for different spaces and the hierarchical orders they contained to operate on their terms within specific locations.

In the third section I show the tensions existing between the formal meanings and subjective understandings of interaction rituals. I then introduce the performance strategies used to manage them. Actors could engage in these to alter performances only because segmentation created spaces in which these could be contested, and their outcomes overlooked if necessary. Here, I apply this understanding to formal diplomacy between East Asian actors in this period. Rival order-building projects established interaction rituals recognising their authority claims and normative agenda. While participation by actors remained a choice, performances remained successful irrespective of whether genuine belief

in their formal meanings existed or not. Thus, authority emerged in practice through the mobilisation of actors in these performances. While rituals assigned roles to actors potentially at odds with understandings of identity elsewhere, these were contextual to the performance itself. Participation signalled no intent beyond the formalities of the interaction ritual at that time. Any tensions surrounding these rituals could be resolved through performance strategies. These strategies facilitated role distancing for actors at odds with a particular ritual even as they continued performing. Their use on an ongoing basis allowed actors to achieve material security by regularising expectations while mitigating the challenge posed to ontological security through performances at odds with their subjective understandings of interaction rituals.

Finally, in the fourth section I outline how polycentric East Asian order existed in the early modern period. Here, I explain how the components of my theoretical framework operate together. This builds on the prevailing monocentric accounts of hierarchy in East Asia by outlining how spatial organisation managed mutually exclusive efforts to pursue order without converging on shared understandings. To reconcile each component, I employ a dramaturgical metaphor for order capturing the ongoing dynamism of repeated encounters between actors. The hierarchical orders pursued by actors are comprised of the interaction rituals structuring relationships with others based on their authority claims and normative agenda. Extending the dramaturgical metaphor, the segmentation of space can be likened to establishing the stage on which performances took place on. Within, predominant actors controlled the choreography of performances and held advantages in orchestrating these to align with their order. As interaction rituals represented sites of tension between formal meanings and the subjective understandings of actors, performance strategies allowed actors to manage their participation within distinct orders. Using a dramaturgical metaphor once more, it can be compared to interpreting a script as the protocol structuring interaction rituals is adapted to better align with either formal meanings or their subjective understandings.

Therefore, this project explains early modern East Asia's stability despite rival order-building projects. As competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas repeatedly came into tension as actors encountered one another, this theoretical framework details the process of ongoing management allowing it to endure without consensus on status and rank existing. Polycentric hierarchy constituted the basis East Asia was organised during this period. To the extent possible, actors defined the roles of other actors during encounters at a particular time and place. That contradictory understandings existed without converging on a

shared organising logic resulted from ambiguity which segmentation of space facilitated. By providing actors the ability to control when, where, and how movement occurred, it ensured the performances constituting polycentric hierarchy occurred in distinct spaces. This accentuated ambiguity and allowed actors to wilfully turn a blind eye to contradictory performances. Therefore, segmentation was a precondition for performance strategies. Jostling over the performances constituting polycentric hierarchy was tolerable only in a system providing the ambiguity necessary for actors to ignore challenges to their understanding of order.

While only briefly discussed here, I understand the nature of order in terms of the conceptual basis for its management, its sociocultural foundation, and the method actors received and understood their roles within it. Conceptually, order goes beyond simply "the degree of predictability (or regularity) of what is going on within a social system" and instead describes a particular social system rather than just the actors inhabiting it and the components managing it.[1] Stability arises from a monopoly on violence in some form, institutionalisation of procedural rules, internalisation of particular normative values, and the welfare of participants.[2] These further constitute the categories on which the nature of order changes either incrementally or dramatically over the course of history.[3] The sociocultural foundation of order provides its constitutional structure organising itself based on shared normative ideas of the moral purpose of centralised political organisation, how sovereignty is understood, and norms of procedural justice.[4] Shared culture provides the 'spirit' that drives actors to accept and participate in order based on self-identification.[5] Finally, actors are assigned particular roles based on a relational approach to order. Different role relationships between actors demand certain actions and obligations, and as such generate tensions. Consequently, relations between actors are ordered on two principles – the instrumental principle driven by consequences seeking to maximise self-interest and an expressive principle comprising social understandings that relations can be driven by the bonds of

[1] Shiping Tang, "Order: A Conceptual Analysis," *Chinese Political Science Review* 1, no. 1 (2016): 33-34.
[2] Tang, "Order," 36-37.
[3] Tang, "Order," 38-40.
[4] Christian Reus-Smit, "The Constitutional Structure of International Society and the Nature of Fundamental Institutions," *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997): 556.
[5] Richard Ned Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 16.

empathy, affection, and mutual support.[6] With this understanding of order, we are able to see how my theoretical framework operates within wider understandings of order in IR.

Early Modern East Asia as a Polycentric Hierarchy

I begin by outlining the concept of polycentric hierarchy. First, I explore how IR and adjacent disciplines conceptualise ideas such as 'polycentrism' or 'heterarchy' as a basis for my approach. Second, I identify polycentric hierarchy as the outcome of competing order-building projects without a shared organising logic that consequently overlap and intersect. Third, I establish the limitations on the simultaneous pursuit of hierarchy. Here, I identify both the asymmetries in the capabilities of actors and problems surrounding the entrenchment of hierarchical norms throughout the system. Fourth, I make the argument for polycentric hierarchy by identifying how distinct efforts pursued by actors were experienced and understood through the interaction rituals structuring relations. To do so I point to how the competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas were expressed and experienced.

My project departs from existing accounts in IR by conceptualising early modern East Asia as a polycentric rather than monocentric hierarchy. As will be seen, the inherent tensions within this formation could not sustain themselves and required actors to develop methods to sustain it over the long-term. Rather than hierarchical order explaining the stability of East Asia in this period, it is the durability of this formation requiring explanation. Thus, I build on existing work on hierarchy management to explain the formation and endurance of polycentric hierarchy. Social science conceptualises polycentrism as the diffusion of authority among multiple actors, departing from unitary depictions of social institutions such as the state. For example, the concept of 'ordered polycentrism' is used to explain the complexities of global governance as the actors involved are bound together despite the appearance of disunity on the surface.[7] In my account, polycentric hierarchy (Figure 1) is the outcome of simultaneous and independent efforts by actors to construct hierarchy. I treat actors as autonomous centres whose efforts intersect and overlap. These are borne out in the interaction rituals between them whose formal meanings produce an authority relationship between them irrespective of self-held understandings. Actors therefore experience and

[6] Zhang, *Chinese Hegemony*, 26-30.
[7] Maria Koinova, Maryam Zarnegar Deloffre, Frank Gadinger, Zeynep Sahin Mencutek, Jan Aart Scholte, and Jens Steffek, "It's Ordered Chaos: What Really Makes Polycentrism Work," *International Studies Review* 23, no. 4 (2021): 1988-2018.

understand the different hierarchies they participate in through micro-level encounters across the entirety of their social relationships. Competing demands and statuses are placed on actors who find themselves entwined in rival efforts. Nevertheless, not all centres are equal as asymmetrical capabilities often exist. Consequently, success in constructing hierarchy varies even as the tension it generates remains ongoing. The result is a heterarchical formation where although a paramount actor may exist, competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas do not converge on a singular organising logic.

Aseema Sinha first developed the concept of polycentric hierarchy to account for internal variations in development levels within states. Using India's post-colonial development as a case, uneven growth is explained by focusing not only on the policies and actions of the central government, but also those of regional governments responding to the established rules of the game and incentives. While all are consequential agents, the central government is predominant, with other actors are stratified along hierarchical lines.[8] This account reflects existing approaches to polycentrism that resemble heterarchy – authority exists among multiple centres who in turn construct their own sub-hierarchies. This article builds on these approaches by emphasising an understanding of polycentric hierarchy lacking a shared organising logic among its different centres. Such a formation required a form of management that did not resolve contradictions but instead managed tensions arising from it.

The durability of a system based on multiple centres pursuing hierarchy simultaneously is not immediately apparent. I argue polycentric hierarchy emerges from the intersection of competing order-building projects by actors that make competing authority claims based on diverging normative agendas. It reflects recent developments in studies of hegemony which illustrate that order-building projects are not the domain of the powerful alone, but saw weaker actors similarly pursue this at odds with them.[9] These competing hierarchies are seen through the dispositions of actors performing in interaction rituals structuring relations between actors. Occurring at the micro-level of the international system, these encounters constitute how actors experience and understand hierarchy in all its contradictions day-by-day. It persists despite tensions arising from conflicting demands placed on actors. This is because managing, rather than resolving, contradictory hierarchical

[8] Aseema Sinha, *The Regional Roots of Developmental Politics in India: A Divided Leviathan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005): 27-33.
[9] G. John Ikenberry & Daniel H. Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0: The Dynamics of Hegemonic Orders," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019): 395-421.

claims best serve competing demands on material and ontological security. Acts of deference allow "unequal partners to affirm their commitment to the status quo of relations" ensuring material security in hierarchy.[10] While deference may stabilise relations, it may also cut against actors' status beliefs about themselves. A desire for ontological security sees actors "need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time – as being rather than constantly changing – in order to realise a sense of agency".[11] In a relational context, preservation of ontological security refers not to the self, but instead protecting a coherent and stable identity in a broader social context.[12] Efforts to secure this are tempered by the realities of power, with actors moderating competition over status if it risks disrupting the equilibrium.[13] Actors in polycentric hierarchy defer to others in spite of status costs to ensure material security, aware that their own efforts will confirm their self-perceived status and thereby ensure their ontological security. Pulled in multiple directions and unable to agree on a shared organising logic, actors rely on negotiating, mediating, and accommodating one another's competing hierarchies to prevent the collapse of the system altogether.

[10] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 314.
[11] Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (2006): 342.
[12] Simon Frankel Pratt, "A Relational View of Ontological Security in International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (2017): 78.
[13] Jonathan Renshon, *Fighting for Status: Hierarchy and Conflict in World Politics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017): 168; Paul K. MacDonald and Joseph M. Parent, "The Status of Status in World Politics," *World Politics* 73, no. 2 (2021): 376-378.

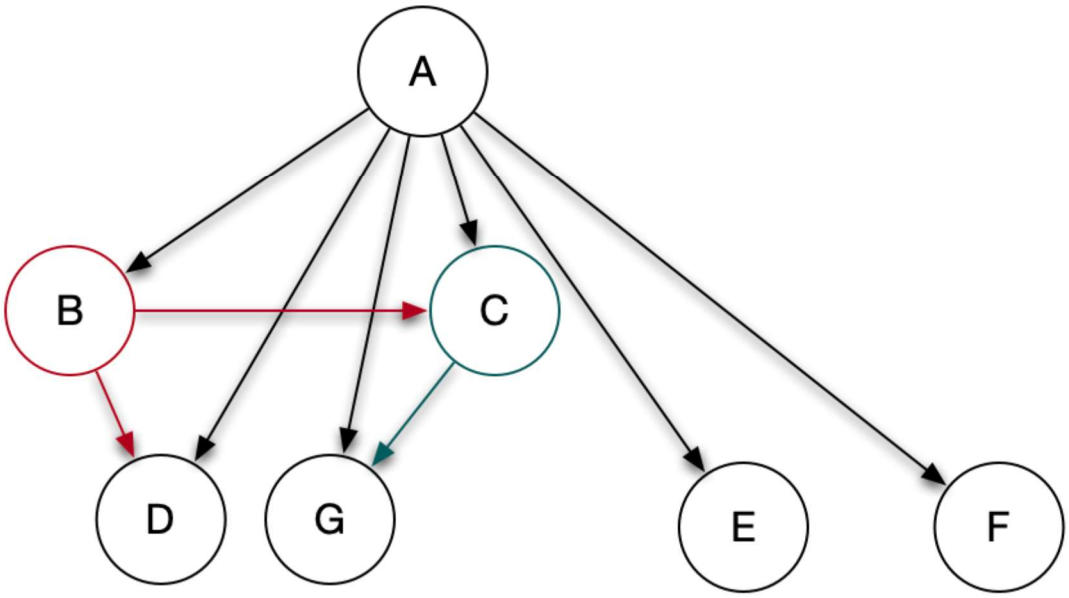

Figure 1: A visualisation of polycentric hierarchy. The direction of the arrows corresponds to the authority claims of an actor borne out in the interaction rituals between them. Actor A is superordinated hierarchically over others in the system. Both Actor B and C maintain their own efforts to build hierarchy, incorporating Actor D and G respectively. Simultaneously, Actor B incorporates Actor C into their own effort to construct hierarchy.[14]

Nevertheless, actors varied in their ability to establish hierarchy as some held greater capabilities, whether military, economic, or social, than others. Put simply, while hierarchy was experienced in the social relationships between actors, an asymmetry in the absolute capabilities of actors throughout the system was imposed on these. Indeed, although "states may desire to change international order in ways that are more closely aligned with their preferences and values… such desires does not necessarily become realized in actual behaviour for a variety of reasons including insufficient capability".[15] Implementation of competing hierarchy projects varied and was limited in the following ways. Most importantly, historical East Asia's entrenched structural norms understood hierarchy to be the basis for organisation in its ideal form. While the realities of the system meant this did not always exist in practice, interaction rituals structuring relationships between actors could only

[14] Many thanks to the anonymous reviewer who provided this graphic in their comments on an earlier version of this theoretical framework submitted elsewhere.
[15] Kai He, Huiyan Feng, Steve Chan, and Weixing Hu, "Rethinking Revisionism in World Politics," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 14, no. 2 (2021): 164.

be conceived of in hierarchical terms. For East Asia, these derived from Chinese philosophy and practice which gave successive dynasties advantages positioning relations in-line with their understanding of hierarchy. A contemporary example would be the World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment that generates standards states must meet to receive aid, stratifying actors on their ability or willingness to meet these. Since actors operate within thicker normative structures beyond their control it is difficult to argue compliance constitutes recognition of authority and the statuses it imparts.[16] This raises questions around the 'legitimacy' of hierarchies if broader structures entrench particular normative understandings.[17] As such, polycentric hierarchy is in part the outcome of a context in which hierarchy is the only form relationships between actors can be structured.

Unequal capabilities among actors do not prevent independent efforts to pursue hierarchy for two reasons. Put simply, inequality does not wholly strip weaker parties of room to manoeuvre. First, structural inequalities imposed on actors remain contestable even if it privileges the claims of dominant actors. They retain the agency to curate and advance their identities and assert personal understandings of status and hierarchy in their relationships.[18] Actors can either contest the validity of norms or as is more common, their meanings in practice as they are enacted in different contexts to define appropriate conduct between actors.[19] Furthermore, dominant norms and ideas in a system can be reconceptualised in local contexts. For example, the 'multiplex world' concept sees actors establish competing rules and norms in distinct spaces that persist even if an actor remains predominant in the overall system.[20] In the context of early modern East Asia, the ability of scholar-officials throughout East Asia to appropriate these interaction rituals and express claims on their terms highlights that even entrenched norms favourable to dominant actors remained contestable.[21]

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[16] Iver B. Neumann and Ole Jacob Sending, *Governing the Global Polity: Practice, Mentality, Rationality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).
[17] Ayşe Zarakol, "Theorising Hierarchies: An Introduction," in *Hierarchies in World Politics*, ed. Ayşe Zarakol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 9.
[18] Chia, "Social Positioning and International Order Contestation," 305-336.
[19] Antje Wiener, *The Invisible Constitution of Politics: Contested Norms and International Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 21-23; Nicole Deitelhoff and Lisbeth Zimmermann, "Things We Lost in the Fire: How Different Types of Contestation Affect the Robustness of International Norms," *International Studies Review* 22, no. 1 (2020): 57-60.
[20] Amitav Acharya, "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism," *International Organization* 58, no. 2 (2004): 239-275; Amitav Acharya, "After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex Order," *Ethics & International Affairs* 31, no. 3 (2017): 277.
[21] Choi, "'Chinese' hegemony from a Korean *shi* perspective," 347-374.

Second, the process of building hierarchy allows actors to contest their relative subordination elsewhere. The coercive asymmetry generated by hierarchies makes recognising acts of deference as voluntary or forced compliance difficult even if the constitutive effects appear highly similar.[22] Indeed, the construction of norms organising encounters in-line with particular understandings of hierarchy establish social rules not achievable by material capabilities alone.[23] As these constitute the normative basis for hierarchy, contesting their appropriateness in structuring relations undermines the legitimacy of these formations.[24] Contestation does not necessarily produce resolution, but rather distinct sets of social rules emerge in particular contexts that enforce certain understandings of status within. Resulting contradictions nevertheless do not preclude polycentric hierarchy as a foundational base for order.[25]

Structural approaches and their emphasis on entrenched norms and practices allow us to better conceptualise polycentric hierarchy. In particular, I build off Vincent Pouliot's work on 'pecking orders' inside international organisations such as NATO and the United Nations wherein diplomatic agents seek to "turn the country's externally defined attributes into diplomatic capital".[26] Encounters occur among entrenched rules and norms as agents in specific sites seek to convey a particular goal in their relations and boost their country's status.[27] This and similar work focuses on micro-level practices that reveal the complex dispositions of actors in different contexts.[28] As will be discussed further below, interaction rituals allow us to conceptualise these dynamics in the relationships between actors. Significant attention was dedicated to their performance as the organisation of encounters through these rituals constituted the way participants experienced and understood hierarchical

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[22] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Jeremy Bentham, foreign secretary; or the opportunity-costs of neo-utilitarian analyses of foreign policy," *Review of International Political Economy* 9, no. 4 (2002): 743.
[23] Vincent Pouliot, "Against Authority: The Heavy Weight of International Hierarchy," Chap. 5 in *Hierarchies in World Politics*, ed. Ayşe Zarakol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 130.
[24] Stacie E. Goddard, *When Right Makes Might: Rising Powers and World Order* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2018); Benjamin Daßler, Andreas Kruck, and Bernhard Zangl, "Interactions between hard and soft power: The institutional adaptation of international intellectual property protection to global power shifts," *European Journal of International Relations* 25, no. 2 (2019): 592.
[25] Tang, "Order: A Conceptual Analysis," 34-35.
[26] Vincent Pouliot, *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 84.
[27] Pouliot, *International Pecking Orders*, 58.
[28] Annika Björkdahl, Martin Hall, and Ted Svensson, "Everyday international relations: Editors' introduction," *Cooperation and Conflict* 54, no. 2 (2019): 123-130; Gëzim Visoka, "Metis diplomacy: The everyday politics of becoming a sovereign state," *Cooperation and Conflict* 54, no. 2 (2019): 167-190; Ty Solomon and Brent J. Steele, "Micro-moves in International Relations theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2017): 267-291.

order. Thus, to see how a polycentric hierarchy hangs together, we first need to see what drives competition inside. I identify contestation in this formation on two lines: competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas.

Authority claims represent a perceived right on the part of an actor to organise encounters recognising their position at the centre. Actors in polycentric hierarchy assign one another superordinate and subordinate roles on different organising logics as their hierarchies intersect during the interaction rituals structuring relations. Seeming acquiescence to a hierarchical formation by actors does not consider whether "the absence of registered dissent becomes taken as an indicator of consent."[29] They navigate competing claims, and to stay out of each other's way, tolerate and even invite misperception over ranking and status. This reflects that authority is neither unabashedly accepted nor absolutely rejected. Structural accounts also question the role of authority, arguing hierarchy predates actors who are stratified instead by entrenched practices.[30] Polycentric hierarchy departs from structural accounts in that while it accepts authority is unclear, this problem results from the agency of each actor pursuing hierarchy. An actor's acceptance of an authority claim is predicated on their interests in a particular time and context. Superordinate actors are never absolute in their authority even if its claims are broadly accepted, with the potential for this to atrophy in practice leading to actors on the periphery seeking independent resolutions to issues of status and rank.[31] Revision by actors need not outright disrupt the superordinate, but instead form alternative material and normative networks centred on them that indirectly erode the primacy of the superordinate.[32] Nevertheless, resolution over disputes are not a precondition for hierarchical formations.[33] Therefore, authority in polycentric hierarchy is a continuing process of renegotiation as actors organise encounters on different logics and in different contexts, forming a nexus that remains durable despite the rival claims they rest on.

Normative agendas refer to the internalised ideological (cultural, social, political, or religious) resources defining what an actor considers appropriate. Their divergence further

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[29] Michael N. Barnett, "International paternalism and humanitarian governance," *Global Constitutionalism* 1, no. 3 (2012): 495.
[30] Pouliot, "Against Authority," 114-115; Ann E. Towns, "Norms and Social Hierarchies: Understanding International Policy Diffusion "From Below"," *International Organization* 66, no. 2 (2012): 188.
[31] Joseph M. Parent and Emily Erikson, "Anarchy, hierarchy, and order," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 22, no. 1 (2009): 129-132.
[32] Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon, *Exit from Hegemony: The Unraveling of the American Global Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).
[33] Christian Reus-Smit, "Power, Legitimacy, and Order," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 7, no. 3 (2014): 359.

placed the competing orders within polycentric hierarchy at odds with one another. They draw on either distinct or shared ideologies to establish mutually exclusive understandings on the basis for authority's legitimacy. The concept of a mimetic challenge highlights subordinate actors appropriating the normative "principles and purposes" of the superordinate by internalising and re-expressing these beliefs to challenge their position.[34] This requires actors to negotiate divergences in meaning by speaking differently to audiences in distinct contexts. It produces status anxiety as actors shift between their own efforts to assign roles and contradictory roles performed during interactions with others.[35] For example, Central Asia following communism's collapse highlights tensions between economic and political engagement with the Western liberal order at odds with domestic regime survival. Partial retreat and engagement in Chinese and Russian counter-institutions promoting 'traditional values' and 'civilizational diversity' creates spaces for self-expression, with the intersection of normative agendas resulting in contestation.[36] Despite the social content of their claims differing, actors in polycentric hierarchy manage normative tensions on a day-to-day basis rather than hold shared understandings.

The example of the Ryukyu kingdom in early modern East Asia highlights the tensions inherent in polycentric hierarchy as rival order-building projects intersected. From 1609, Ryukyu was simultaneously incorporated into the orders of Tokugawa Japan and both Ming and Qing China. As will be seen later in this project, its position in both hierarchies contradicted their respective authority claims and normative agendas. Such a situation should not endure considering consequent tensions risk conflict. Its ability to do so for over two centuries cannot easily be explained in current accounts and directs our attention to spatial organisation as the basis for managing order.

Segmentation of Space

This section explains how the segmentation of space managed rival order-building projects. First, I explore how IR has used the concept of segmentation. Expanding on these accounts, I turn to anthropology to draw insights in fleshing out this concept. Second, I define

[34] Suzuki, "The agency of subordinate polities," 178-180.
[35] Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State* (London: Routledge, 2008): 2; Rebecca Adler-Nissen, "Stigma Management in International Relations: Transgressive Identities, Norms, and Order in International Society," *International Organization* 68, no. 1 (2014).
[36] Alexander Cooley, "Ordering Eurasia: The Rise and Decline of Liberal Internationalism in the Post-Communist Space," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019): 589-591.

the segmentation of space as the demarcation of boundaries between order-building projects. Space is understood as a physical location with recognisable boundaries whether de jure or de facto. Segmentation is achieved through controlling movement within and between spaces to establish a distinct logic of appropriateness enforcing demands on behaviour within. Third, I contextualise segmentation of space in early modern East Asia by establishing the limited 'interaction capacity' throughout the system resulting from technological limitations in surpassing the physical geography of East Asia. Fourth, I outline the inside/outside dynamic produced that hid the mutually exclusive claims of order-building projects.

I introduce the segmentation of space as the basis for managing the competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas of rival order-building projects. If polycentric hierarchy is the outcome of the untold number of interaction rituals occurring between actors, segmentation presented the method ensuring these could be kept at a distance by controlling movement. Here, actors established boundaries between different spaces wherein a particular logic of appropriateness based on an actor's authority claims and normative agenda prevailed. Boundaries were maintained as actors maintained the authority to dictate when, where, and how encounters took place within. This managed contradictions by segmenting the competing order-building projects of polycentric hierarchy in distinct spaces. It allows for a "conscious effort to slow down the pace of events or decisions, perhaps even to stretch, pause, or opt out of time (and even space), either literally or figuratively."[37] Doing so allowed for the predominant actor within a space to assign roles and dictate how performances occurred within at the micro-level. Thus, rather than conceive of boundaries as strict border controls alone, these are better conceptualised as efforts by actors to dictate how actors conducted themselves. Segmentation represents the staging occurring before the performances constituting polycentric hierarchy. By establishing the set on which it takes place, the meanings this entails are established by an actor to reflect their normative agenda. The ability to do so is significant, with Erik Ringmar highlighting

> On a stage, however, power is not exercised but performed. That is, what matters is not what A can make B do but instead how such arm-twisting is interpreted by other actors

[37] Jack L. Amoureux, "Is faster better? Political and ethical framings of pace and space," *International Theory* 12, no. 2 (2020): 175.

> and by the members of the audience. Their reaction far more important than the action itself and their reaction is what the exercise of power ultimately seeks to influence.[38]

Thus, the ability to engage in segmentation demonstrates how actors managed tensions around legitimising their authority within their orders considering asymmetries in capabilities between actors.

For IR, Daniel Nexon and Thomas Wright conceptualise segmentation as a structural attribute between the core and periphery within an empire. Heterogeneous contracting allows empires to form relations with the periphery on separate terms negotiated so as to form a logic of appropriateness acceptable to both that stabilises their rule. Alongside this, preventing contact between different peripheral actors prevents the formation of coalitions to resist their rule.[39] Meghan Mcconaughey, Paul Musgrave, and Daniel H. Nexon expand on this by identifying this in the dynamics around the investiture of authority within governing hierarchies across the international system. They contrast formations in which segments either invest themselves on their own authority or receive this from the centre on a de facto or de jure basis. In contrast, the tension within early modern East Asia is that both forms existed simultaneously which required management considering their contradictory claims.[40] Here, it is in anthropology's original conception of segmentation where we see both forms of authority co-existing. Known as a segmentary society, this ideal-type formation emerged out of different lineages tied together through kinship. Each lineage constitutes a segment with authority over a specific group and/or function. Here, political authority is defined by flexibility rather than centralisation as the heads of each segment (such as an immediate family) mediate interactions between one another. Thus, the leader of a tribal society often only commands ritual suzerainty over these segments, with the different heads holding actual authority over members therein.[41] Rough comparisons can be drawn with how segmentation

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[38] Erik Ringmar, "Performing International Systems: Two East Asian Alternatives to the Westphalian Order," *International Organization* 66, no. 1 (2012): 19.
[39] Daniel H. Nexon and Thomas Wright, "What's at Stake in the American Empire Debate," *The American Political Science Review* 101, no. 2 (2007): 259-261.
[40] Meghan Mcconaughey, Paul Musgrave, and Daniel H. Nexon, "Beyond anarchy: logics of political organization, hierarchy, and international structure," *International Theory* 10, no. 2 (2018): 197-198.
[41] Meyer Fortes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *African Political Systems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940); Meyer Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship of the Tallensi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945); E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940); Marshall D. Sahlins, "The Segmentary Lineage: An Organization of Predatory Expansion," *American Anthropologist* 63, no. 2 (1961): 322-345; Hans Peter Hahn, "Segmentary Societies as Alternatives to Hierarchical Orders: Sustainable Social Structures or Organisation of Predatory Violence?" Vol.

operated in polycentric hierarchy as different order-building projects organising space exercised their authority autonomously within a wider framework.

Pre-modern Southeast Asia's mandala system provides the best example of spatial organisation being central to the management of competing order-building projects. Alternatively known as the 'galactic polity' or 'solar polity' it captures the diffusion of power among actors to engage in spatial organisation by using Kautilya's mandala theory to understand order in this period.[42] Like the tributary system, this model is a product of Western historiography originating in O.W. Wolters linking the concept of the *rajamandala* ('Circle of Kings') to King Naresuan of Ayutthaya's foreign policy in the late sixteenth century. Wolter's argued Naresun's friend-enemy distinction towards other polities based on proximity was drawn from the *Arthashastra*.[43] It highlights sovereignty decreasing further from the capital leaving peripheral actors in tension with the centre. Monopolies on violence are limited to the centre's immediate proximity, even though nominal authority to exercise it throughout the periphery exists. The periphery emulated the centre by asserting authority over local actors and even potentially defecting from the centre.[44] As James Scott highlights, a state-court view of pre-modern Southeast Asia overlooks how effective units of political analysis encompassed nuclear families, lineages, hamlets, and villages. Membership within polities was in constant flux as actors retained the capability to move independent of the centre's wishes. Relations were a "contingent alliance of the same elementary units" who imitated the "cosmological bluster" of the centre's claims to universal rulership.[45] Although not completely resembling this project's conception of segmentation in that it displayed features not unlike a convoluted form of delegated authority to explain the periphery's autonomy, it conveys that spatial organisation occurred without a singular organising logic.

1, in *Beyond elites: Alternatives to hierarchical systems in modelling social formations*, eds. Tobias L. Kienlin and Andreas Zimmerman (Bonn: Rudolph Habelt, 2012): 34-36.

[42] Sunait Chutintaranond, ""Mandala", "Segmentary State" and Politics of Centralization in Medieval Ayudhya," *Journal of the Siam Society* 78 (1990): 89; Stanley J. Tambiah, "The galactic polity in Southeast Asia," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 3, no. 3 (2013): 503-534; Victor Lieberman, *Strange Parallels Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830: Volume 1: Integration on the Mainland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[43] O.W. Wolters, "Ayudhyā and the Rearward Part of the World," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 100, no. 2 (1968): 166-178.

[44] Aidan Southall, "A Note on State Organization: Segmentary State in Africa and in Medieval Europe," in *Early Medieval Society*, edited by Sylvia L. Thrupp (New York: Meredith Publishing Company, 1967): 149-150.

[45] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Southeast Asia* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2009): 36-37.

This project understands the segmentation of space as a set of interconnected spaces demarcating the boundaries of different order-building projects. Within a space established by an actor the prevailing logic of appropriateness reflected their understandings. Interaction rituals conveyed the status and identity of those performing in-line with their vision of hierarchy. As such, segmentation is critical as it mobilised actors in the very performances representing how hierarchical order was experienced. Thus, segmentation is only possible to the extent other actors respect these efforts. Considering the challenges to ontological security posed by different audiences holding different standards of appropriateness, segmenting these allowed for contradictions to be hidden. Recognition of an actor's authority to engage in segmentation demonstrated acknowledgement of their hierarchy in a particular space. As no singular organising logic existed in polycentric hierarchy, segmentation allowed for several actors to establish their own logic of appropriateness within reflecting their understandings of order. In light of the contradictions as actors took on conflicting identities within different spaces, the ability to establish an inside/outside dynamic proved central. Tensions placed on actors associated with conflicting identities are resolved as these are taken on in distinct spaces that hold their own logics of appropriateness.

Space refers to the physical location bounded by actors establishing sites to exercise authority within their hierarchical order. It constitutes the "bordering, bounding, parcelization, [and] enclosure" of relations within a particular location.[46] It is not just "a static container, but… the momentary outcome of social construction."[47] Due to the porous nature of boundaries in early modern East Asia, the extent of a space is better recognised in the area wherein a logic of appropriateness could be enforced through demands on behaviour over those within. The extent of an actor's control over movement, whether in the ritualised encounters constituting formal diplomacy or the maritime restrictions placed on traders, conveyed the extent of their boundaries. As the interaction rituals conveying hierarchy could only be conducted where an actor could mobilise actors in its performance, physical locations are critical in demarcating these sites. These spaces exist whether boundaries were de jure or de facto. De jure spaces are the formally recognised borders between and within actors. Today, this can be seen most clearly in the contemporary state-system and their internal subdivisions. De facto spaces are established in practice but lack formal recognition.

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[46] Bob Jessop, Neil Brenner and Martin Jones, "Theorizing sociospatial relations," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26, no. 3 (2008): 393.

[47] Daniel Lambach, "Space, scale, and global politics: Towards a critical approach to space in international relations," *Review of International Studies* 48, no. 2 (2022): 283.

Secessionists, rebels, and non-recognised governments constitute actors capable of undertaking spatial organisation in this manner. For example, Islamic State exercised authority over an area the size of Great Britain or Belgium. It stretched over and challenged the recognised borders of Iraq and Syria. While functioning like a state in practice, it received no formal recognition.[48] For early modern East Asia, the personal fiefdoms of daimyō during the Sengoku Period operated as de facto spaces in the absence of central control offer another example. Both kinds of space remain recognisable to actors.

Segmentation keeps spaces at a distance by ensuring contradictions do not come into contact to the extent possible. To segment conflicting authorities, actors organise space on two lines. First, they establish a logic of appropriateness. Logics form the basis for legitimising authority within particular spaces. They do not recognise other expressions of authority, but neither do they openly challenge them. This can be seen through the interaction rituals structuring relations between actors that are unique to the place they are conducted. As the embassies constituting formal diplomacy in early modern East Asia entered a particular space, their alignment is seen not just in their performance itself but their mobilisation as they travelled to the relevant site it took place. Second, they place demands on the behaviour of actors. Compliance with these recognises authority claims in practice. Therefore, it is in these strictures that hierarchies are reflected in the practices of actors. Most importantly, it is here that the controls over movement between spaces occur. An example in the world today are the movement controls established by passports in authorising states to permit or deny entry. Passports afford a 'monopoly on movement' and are central to maintaining and enforcing boundaries.[49] Nevertheless, differences in material and ideological capabilities result in pattern decay as more power actors are more effective in enforcing the bevy of economic, political, and social institutions that constituted segmentation.[50]

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[48] Haroro J. Ingram and Devorah Margolin, "Inside the Islamic State in Mosul: A Snapshot of the Logic & Banality of Evil," in *The ISIS Files* (2020): 7-11.

[49] John Torpey, "Coming and Going: On the State Monopolization of the Legitimate 'Means of Movement'," *Sociological Theory* 16, no. 3 (1998): 239-242.

[50] Segmentation can therefore be considered an ideal-type or abstracted theoretical representation of the strategic choices made by actors in early modern East Asia whose outcome minimised contradictions between their order-building projects. Although segmentation is not an active strategy existing as a regional social institution that practitioners at the time understood themselves to be taking part in, the institutions that comprised it were consciously implemented by actors to serve the interests of their orders. As such, this category still captures the strategic choices of actors rather than the unthinking outcomes of the structural pressures facing them.

Contradictory expressions of authority could be hidden due to the absence of immediate communications or rapid transportation. This left actors at the time without detailed knowledge of political circumstances elsewhere. Within IR, the concept of 'interaction capacity' demonstrates how this operates between actors in a system.[51] Barry Buzan and Richard Little define this as "the amount of transportation, communication, and organizational capability… how much in the way of goods and information can be moved over what distances at what speeds and at what costs".[52] It comprises both the technological capabilities around movement and the shared rules and norms governing this between and within polities.[53] Driven by a desire for greater extractive capacity, it is only in the contemporary system where "the modern state, in both its colonial and its independent guises, has had the resources to realize a project of rule that was a mere glint in the eye of its precolonial ancestor: namely to bring nonstate spaces and people to heel."[54] Here, the "distance-demolishing technology of railroads and all-weather motor roads" not to mention airplanes which allow rulers to exercise direct control were beyond East Asia's rulers in the early modern period.[55] Thus, although the act of segmentation was the outcome of conscious choices made by actors, structural considerations play an important role in determining the extent to which it is possible within the international system. As will be seen in this project's case studies, the denizens of early modern East Asia inhabited a system of low mobility for most of the population. It is only in the absence of strong interaction capacity that actors can organise encounters in a manner resulting in competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas being hidden.

Throughout the early modern period in East Asia, the segmentation of space was facilitated by the technological limitations on their interaction capacity. Two examples in the nineteenth century highlight the consequent lack of knowledge this produced. First, in 1848 a

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[51] John Ruggie employs a similar concept by drawing on Émile Durkheim's concept of 'dynamic diversity' to account for changes in the international system. He points to the "growth in the volume and dynamic density of societies modifies profoundly the fundamental conditions of collective existence" as a key variable across time. Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, ed. E.G. Catlin (New York: The Free Press, 1933): 115; Quoted in John Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalisation* (London: Routledge, 1998): 151.

[52] Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 80.

[53] Charles Butcher and Ryan Griffiths, "War, interaction capacity, and the structures of state systems," *International Theory* 13, no. 2 (2021): 380.

[54] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 4.

[55] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States AD 990-1992* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992); Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 45.

collection of annotated maps produced by the Governor of Fujian Province in China depicted the country as having three main islands – the northern island of Tui-ma-tao (Tsushima), the central island of Ch'ang-ch'i (Nagasaki), and the southern island of Sa-szu-ma (Satsuma). Refusing to acknowledge Western depictions based on the reasonable assumption their historical interaction with Japan had been minimal, his account nevertheless mistook the ports Chinese or other East Asian traders had visited for the islands of the Japanese archipelago.[56] Second, during the First Opium War (1839-1842) a false rumour found its way into the Qing court claiming Đại Việt had overwhelmingly defeated the British navy in 1808. This resulted in discussions over enlisting Đại Việt's navy to fight on their behalf, with the Qing only realising later no war had occurred between the two.[57] In such an environment, it becomes apparent how the mutually exclusive claims of rival orders could be managed through segmentation.

An inside/outside dynamic is at the heart of segmentation. Encounters occurring at the micro-level of international life bound a particular space for actors allowing them to perform their authority. This prevents any contradictions with other expressions of authority that occurred externally. Consequently, the status and identity of actors differed between them. There are two dimensions to the inside/outside dynamic – the physical bounding between spaces and the perceptual field denoting the audience capable of viewing performances of order within. Physicality is conveyed through Erving Goffman's metaphor of the front and back stage. The front is central as it maintains an image in line with social requirements when engaging in interactions and conceals actions that contravene this.[58] In contrast, the backstage affords actors the space to let their guard down and not meet social standards by expressing themselves in a contradictory manner.[59] Nevertheless, a clear distinction between front and back rarely exists outright as interconnections between actors makes it difficult to hide knowledge of status claims made by actors inside. Thus, perception is critical as actors gear their performance based on the willingness as well as the capability of actors to view it rather than assume the ability for contradictory dispositions to be hidden on the inside. Joshua Meyrowitz expands on Goffman by highlighting the capability of an actor's view to transcend physically demarcated boundaries that breaks down distinctions between the front

[56] Robert I. Hellyer, *Defining Engagement: Japan and Global Contexts, 1640-1868* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009): 1-3.
[57] Insun Yu, "Vietnam-China Relations in the 19th Century: Myth and Reality of the Tributary System," *Journal of Northeast Asian History* 6, no. 1 (2009): 104-105.
[58] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin Books, 1969): 50-51.
[59] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, 223.

and back as distinct spaces.[60] The inability to prevent knowledge of contradictions expressed in the back means "whatever aspects of the rehearsal become visible to the audience must be integrated into the show itself."[61] Consequently, the ambiguity necessary for the success of polycentric hierarchy is the outcome of actors fostering an inside/outside dynamic through segmentation. For historical East Asia, the term 'emperor at home, king abroad' captures this dynamic. It originates in the relationship between Han China and the Nanyue kingdom in the second century BCE. The *Shiji* records Nanyue's rulers styling themselves 'emperor' despite formal rebuke from the Han, only using 'king' when dispatching envoys to China.[62] As will be seen, this phenomenon recurred across historical East Asia. Considering the different capabilities and goals of actors, the inside/outside dynamic of segmentation rested to a significant degree on a desire to not openly acknowledge the contradictions of polycentric hierarchy.

East Asia's maritime controls provided the basis for segmentation by establishing the spaces housing their competing order-building projects. Tokugawa Japan's *sakoku* edicts are an example of this practice as only select foreign actors could trade in four designated locations. Compliance with the Tokugawa logic of appropriateness and demands on behaviour is seen in accepting trading licenses which regulated entry and acknowledged the authority of the shōgun. For both Chinese and Dutch actors this challenged their own understandings and constituted a humiliating concession to the Tokugawa order. Such a situation was only tolerable as their performances within the Tokugawa order could be safely hidden and therefore would not contradict their claims elsewhere.

Performance Strategies

Finally, in this section I establish the tensions inherent in the performance of interaction rituals. Likewise, I identify the performance strategies used to manage this. First, I establish interaction rituals as the choreographed encounters between participants whose performances constitute how order is experienced by actors. Second, I challenge settled accounts of interaction rituals in IR by highlighting the tensions as formal meanings are

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[60] Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Behavior* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985): 5-7.
[61] Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place*, 47.
[62] "*Shi ji* 10: The Basic Annals of Emperor Wen the Filial," in Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian of China: Han Dynasty I*, trans. Burton Watson, Revised Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 305-306; "*Shi ji* 113: The Account of Southern Yue," in Sima Qian, *Records of the Grand Historian of China: Han Dynasty II*, trans. Burton Watson, Revised Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 210.

juxtaposed against the subjective understandings of actors. Third, I establish that alongside the symbolic meanings of interaction rituals, the mobilisation of actors in a performance imposed demands that had material impacts. Fourth, I explain how the tensions within interaction rituals were managed through four performance strategies employed at the micro-level – confrontation, accommodation, manipulation, and avoidance.

Formal Meanings and Subjective Understandings

Interaction rituals constitute the means actors establish their authority claims and normative agendas through performances. This project understands interaction rituals in the following way. At its foundation, it employs Erving Goffman's definition interaction rituals are "that class of events which occurs during co-presence and by virtue of co-presence… external signs of orientation and involvement – states of mind and body not ordinarily examined with respect to their social organization." Looking at these interactions at the micro-level allow us to not only uncover a system's entrenched normative structure, but the dynamics on which social encounters take place in particular sites.[63] Here, a situational co-presence between the agents of actors transforms into an interaction as the encounter becomes the centre of mutual focus, albeit with the level of intensity and sense of obligation varying. These rituals exert pressure that establishes social solidarity making conformity among participants the desired goal. When tensions re-emerge between actors, the uneasiness it generates sees them repeat these interaction rituals.[64] Since participants brought competing understandings, performances of interaction rituals constituted how actors ultimately experienced order and the tensions associated with managing relationships with others in light of contradictions. Performances at the micro-level generated emotional energy at the micro-level which extends upwards to the meso- and macro-level.[65] Repetition over time came to form 'interaction ritual chains' that become routine within social structures.[66] Therefore, this understanding of interaction rituals allows us to see how understandings of order are contested between actors across repeated performances day-to-day.

Nevertheless, actors do not experience interaction rituals identically as a juxtaposition exists between formal meanings and subjective understandings. The formal dimensions of

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[63] Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982): 1-2.
[64] Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 23-25.
[65] Wayne E. Baker, "Emotional Energy, Relational Energy, and Organizational Energy: Toward a Multilevel Model," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour* 6, no. 1 (2019): 386-389.
[66] Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 152.

diplomacy, particularly the pageantry associated with relations in early modern East Asia, served to display and communicate the disposition of actors towards status. Undoubtedly, the performance of interaction rituals serves as a cohesive force for the disparate actors that comprise a particular hierarchy. Here, "Ritual's rhythms, the construction of a predictable repetition, create a vital sense of shared and social time…and knowing when to expect the next ritual "beat" means that we also share some sense of our future together".[67] Indeed, IR has noted the distinctiveness of rhythm in establishing a particular cadence in relationships between actors and how this shapes political formations.[68] Yet even as it established hierarchical order through its performance, Catherine Bell identifies ritualised interactions "as a strategic mode of practice [that] produces nuanced relations of power, relationships characterized by acceptance and resistance, negotiated appropriation, and redemptive reinterpretations of the hegemonic order".[69] Indeed, carrying out these performances and the formal meanings attached is a site of contestation over status and identity between participants as their experiences produce contradictory subjective understandings. This contestation is limited by the reality interaction rituals are often established by superordinate actors who assign roles within performances through acts of curation to mitigate against subjective understandings. Like hierarchy itself, interaction rituals occurred on asymmetrical lines. Furthermore, potential changes to the formal meanings of performances "are constrained by social conventions regarding intelligibility. We can choose whether, but not how, we make sense."[70] Aforementioned structural norms around modes of interaction could not easily be changed, but only adapted to suit the interests of participants even if their actions do not deviate entirely from formal meanings.[71] Despite this, contestation remained an ongoing tension playing out in the performance of interaction rituals structuring relations between actors.

Participation in interaction rituals and the meanings they convey is difficult to avoid. This represents a problem underexplored in IR as while performances remain consistent, subjective understandings impact the efficacy of interaction rituals underneath the surface.

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[67] Adam B. Seligman and Robert P. Weller, *Rethinking Pluralism: Ritual, Experience, and Ambiguity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 118.
[68] Ty Solomon, "Rhythm and Mobilization in International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2019): 1001-1013.
[69] Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992): 196.
[70] Ringmar, "Performing International Systems," 7.
[71] Bernhard Giesen, "Performing the Sacred: A Durkheimian Perspective on the Performance Turn in the Social Sciences," in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, eds. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 337-338.

Indeed, subjective understandings pose a challenge to interaction rituals as the "existence of alternatives poses a constant threat to our conceptions of order, but it also begins to let us regulate this threat."[72] Ongoing participation within interaction rituals actors no longer identify with undermines their willingness to continue over time. Yet participation often continues nonetheless. While ultimately remaining a choice, participation in interaction rituals is difficult for actors to opt out of. Since non-participation is a costly and destabilising move in a relationship, actors often choose to endure these performances.[73] Indeed, historically societies exerted greater controls making it difficult to escape rituals formalising unequal socials bonds.[74] Furthermore, for most of history diplomatic practice saw hierarchy as the formal mode of conduct or at minimum the accepted outcome of an actor's preponderant power making it difficult for interactions to not occur in this manner.[75] For IR, the omnipresence of formal diplomatic protocol and choreographed encounters between leaders and/or their diplomatic agents constitute 'thick' structures exerting social pressure on actors' as rituals heterogenize them into distinct categories or pressure convergence on homogenous identities.[76] 'Strain' therefore exists between social structures determining appropriate behaviour and the desires of actors themselves at odds with these.[77] For East Asian actors in this period, these tensions are reflected in the dispositions of actors performing in interaction rituals.

With these tensions in mind, I establish how interaction rituals operate along two dimensions. Together, they reveal how actors experience hierarchy through their performance. First as discussed earlier, the performance itself brings forth a particular narrative and assigns status to participants who take on roles within a particular context agnostic to genuine belief. Participation is a means of stabilising relations between actors and often reflects the dominant paradigm on which interactions take place. Considering that polycentric hierarchy contained competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas, this posed no trouble to actors as the performance itself, although recognising the

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[72] Seligman and Weller, *Rethinking Pluralism*, 23.
[73] Summers-Effler, "The Micro Potential for Social Change," 41-60.
[74] Collins, "Interaction ritual chains and collective effervescence," 302.
[75] William C. Wohlforth, Stuart J. Kaufman and Richard Little, "Introduction: Balance and Hierarchy in International Systems," in *The Balance of Power in World History*, eds. William C. Wohlforth, Stuart J. Kaufman and Richard Little (London: Palgrave, 2007): 6-7.
[76] Towns, "Norms and Social Hierarchies," 179-209; Ann E. Towns and Bahar Rumelili, "Taking the pressure: Unpacking the relation between norms, social hierarchies, and social pressure on states," *European Journal of International Relations* 23, no. 4 (2017): 756-779; Ayşe Zarakol, "What made the modern world hang together: socialisation or stigmatisation?," *International Theory* 6, no. 2 (2014): 311-332.
[77] Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," *American Sociological Review* 3, no. 5 (1938): 672-682.

normative agenda of the superordinate, did not require acceptance of its claims in order to be meaningful and produce stability.[78] Regulation is found in the act of ritual, occurring within a space that positions relations between individuals that "are imbued by meanings and shaped by conventions external to the performer."[79] This reflects the work of Émile Durkheim who treats religion as the frame that shapes the moral universe of a society, pointing to the 'totem' as the locus that represents this. If we situate the normative agenda of a hierarchy as the central 'totem' of interaction rituals, we can identify not only the world performed, but its internalisation by actors who create their own symbols and points of significance in relation to it.[80] In other words, interaction rituals are intersubjective as the formal meanings of performances exist alongside subjective understandings.[81] Actors retained the ability to emphasise or deemphasise the importance of performances.

Second, interaction rituals reveal the extent an actor's order-building project is capable of mobilising others in their performance. Beyond performing an actor's normative agenda and the associated status in a hierarchy, this framework reveals the physical demands that go into staging interaction rituals as resources, attention, and personnel are required to support interactions. Whether intentional or not, this posed material costs for actors as performances often placed physical demands on actors as they took part in hierarchical order. The totality of the demands that interaction rituals could place on actors can be seen in Clifford Geertz's concept of the theatre state. Used as a framework to conceptualise the Balinese polity in the nineteenth century, it describes a system:

> in which the kings and princes were the impresarios, the priests the directors, and the peasants the supporting cast, stage crew, and audience. The stupendous cremations, tooth filings, temple dedications, pilgrimages, and blood sacrifices, mobilizing hundreds and even thousands of people and great quantities of wealth, were not means to political ends: they were the ends themselves, they were what the state was for.[82]

Here, not only was authority conveyed through the scale of mobilisation, but the act of doing so directed the material resources of potential rivals towards its very confirmation.

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[78] Seligman and Weller, *Rethinking Pluralism*, 8-9.
[79] Seligman and Weller, *Rethinking Pluralism*, 93.
[80] Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 319-320.
[81] Alex Gillespie, "The intersubjective nature of symbols," Chap. 1 in *Symbolic Transformation: The Mind in Movement through Culture and Society*, ed. Brady Wagoner (London: Routledge, 2009): 23-37.
[82] Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981): 13.

Furthermore, the process of mobilising actors in performances of interaction rituals can have unforeseen consequences. This is demonstrated in the example of the royal touch in Medieval England and France. Marc Bloch highlights the belief that the laying on of hands by the king was capable of curing scrofula (known today as cervical tuberculous lymphadenitis).Such acts not only demonstrated the legitimacy of the king's divine position through performance, but as Bloch argues had minor health benefits to participants as while a superstition, seeking it out unintentionally prevented patients from seeking more dangerous remedies.[83] Both examples highlight that interaction rituals had ramifications lingering far beyond their immediate performance. They show interaction rituals did not just confer symbolic legitimacy on the authority of a particular order but that mobilisation of actors to do so constructed it in practice through the demands it imposed.

Types of Performance Strategies

Thus, interaction rituals structuring relationships between actors in early modern East Asia posed numerous challenges despite the veneer of stability associated with ongoing performances. Tensions between formal meanings and subjective understandings of interaction rituals necessitated performance strategies to allow actors to mitigate threats to their identity at the micro-level of these day-to-day encounters. These sought to mitigate or accentuate the formal meanings or subjective understandings of interaction rituals to better reflect an actor's understanding. Doing so protected their ontological security as participation in another order contradicted the basis on which their authority was legitimised and undercut their perceived status which threatened understandings of identity. As jostling over the meaning of interaction rituals through performance strategies generates tension, segmentation is a precondition for their use. To demonstrate how this was managed, I define and document four agent-level mechanisms known as performance strategies to explain how actors manage contestation within interaction rituals. These include - confrontation, accommodation, manipulation, and avoidance. Representing ideal types imposed on the past, these highlight that repeated management of interaction rituals at the micro-level occurred on an ongoing basis. These are situated in turn on two axes. First, performance strategies are classified as covert or overt. This identifies the degree these are observable. Second, performance strategies are classified as benign or malign. This identifies an actor's attitude when

[83] Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J.E. Anderson (London: Routledge, 2015): 243.

attempting to alter the performance of an interaction ritual. Figure 2 situates performance strategies on these axes. Together, they provide an explanatory toolkit for how interaction rituals remained manageable despite tensions around their meaning. Indeed, performance strategies reflect Erving Goffman's concept of role distance which describe "actions which effectively convey some disdainful detachment of the performer from a role he is performing."[84] These acts drive a wedge between the formal meaning and an actor's subjective understandings. They signal, whether understood or not, an actor's disdain and are utilised due to a sense of insecurity in a particular performance.[85]

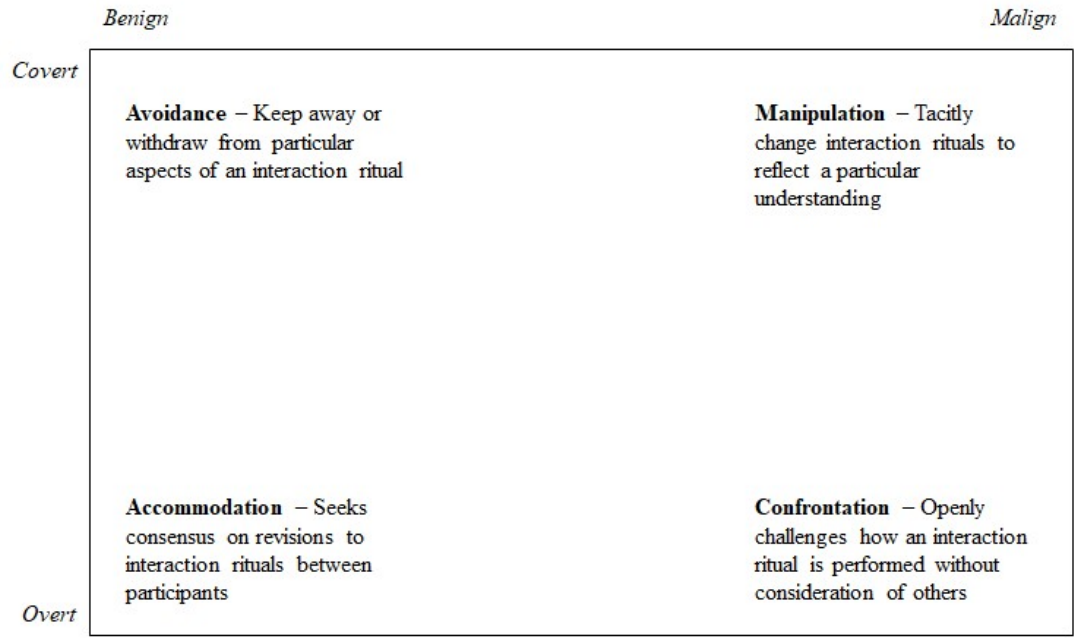

Figure 2: Performance strategies employed during interaction rituals

Confrontation sees actors openly challenge the performance of an interaction ritual. It is overt as instigating actors do not seek to hide their displeasure with an existing interaction ritual. Likewise, it is malign as revisions express an indifference or willingness to deny understandings of an interaction ritual beyond those of the instigating actor. Alterations to interaction rituals insult other participants as the instigating actor denies their identity and

[84] Erving Goffman, *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961): 110.
[85] Goffman, *Encounters*, 106-109; Robert Cohen, "Role Distance: On Stage and On the Merry-Go-Round," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 19, no. 1 (2004): 122.

status. This debases their self-esteem in the process of revising interaction rituals.[86] Insults empower 'aggressors' as they advance their understanding, register their position, and boost their ego.[87] How instigating actors physically interact, control presentation of diplomatic sites, language used, and the gifts exchanged provide an opportunity for confrontation just as much as reconfirming an equilibrium.[88] As formalities have defined appropriate behaviour, it provides background knowledge informing actors of the consequences around transgression.[89] Employing confrontation is not without risk as acknowledging tensions and challenging the performance of an interaction ritual openly risks destabilising the wider relationship between actors.

Accommodation sees actors establish consensus on revisions to interaction rituals. It is overt as the instigating actor ensures other participants are aware of changes. Likewise, it is benign in ensuring changes are satisfactory to all participants. Alterations to interaction rituals include revising protocol and/or providing the opportunity for others to turn a blind eye to actions. The instigating actor ensures that all participants accept the proposed revisions. This non-confrontational manner does not threaten an interaction ritual's equilibrium and stabilises the relationship between actors. As Communication Accommodation Theory highlights, actors adapt their speech rate, vocal intensity, and posture among other things to facilitate the interaction.[90] By employing accommodation, the instigating actor allows other participants to 'save face'. This is important in not only preserving their ontological security but allows interaction rituals to remain predictable as knowledge of discrepancies would jeopardise stability.[91]

Manipulation sees actors tacitly change interaction rituals to advantage the instigating actor's understanding. It is covert in ensuring alterations remain 'hidden' below the threshold for acknowledgement. Likewise, it is malign in how subtle changes undercut formal meanings and/or self-held understandings of other participants. Alterations include reorganising performances by changing protocol without informing others. Subtlety

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[86] Alisher Faizullaev, *Symbolic Insult in Diplomacy: A Subtle Game of Diplomatic Slap* (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 5-6.
[87] Seanon S. Wong, "One-upmanship and putdowns: the aggressive use of interaction rituals in face-to-face diplomacy," *International Theory* 13, no. 2 (2021): 348-357.
[88] Wong, "One-upmanship and putdowns," 357-366.
[89] Goffman, *Frame Analysis*, 22.
[90] Howard Giles, Nikolas Coupland, and Justine Coupland, "Accommodation theory: Communication, context, and consequence," Chap. 1 in *Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Applied Sociolinguistics*, eds. Howard Giles, Justine Coupland, and Nikolas Coupland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 5-11.
[91] Deepak Nair, "Saving face in diplomacy: A political sociology of face-to-face interactions in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations," *European Journal of International Relations* 25, no. 3 (2019): 679.

distinguishes manipulation by ensuring it remains sufficiently discreet that participants overlook it to maintain equilibrium during interaction rituals. Even if resulting performances are the product of deceit, the understandings of instigating actors are recognised in practice. As Joseph Raz highlights, "manipulation, unlike coercion, does not interfere with a person's options. Instead, it perverts the way that person reaches decisions, forms preference, or adopts goals".[92] Likewise, Claudia Mills argues that a "manipulator tries to change another's beliefs and desires by offering her bad reasons, disguised as good, or faulty arguments, disguised as sound—where the manipulator himself knows these to be bad reasons and faulty arguments".[93] It is an act of 'trickery' compelling another to undertake actions against their "beliefs, desires, and emotions".[94]

Avoidance sees actors keep away or withdraw from certain aspects of interaction rituals. It is covert by not openly altering interaction rituals and instead distancing oneself from aspects of a performance to preserve ontological security. Likewise, it is benign in allowing alternative interpretations of an interaction ritual to exist. Alterations to interaction rituals include withdrawing from particular acts and an unwillingness to perform in certain locations and/or times due to the meanings this would convey. Instigating actors still take part in the interaction ritual but seek to dictate the time and place they occur. It also ensures the performance of contradictory interaction rituals remain hidden. This allows them to circumvent expected formalities and the symbolic meanings attached. As Goffman highlights, "If we see perception as a form of contact and communion, then control over what is perceived is control over contact that is made, and the limitation and regulation of what is shown is a limitation and regulation of contact".[95] Rather than conceive of avoidance as a binary between connection and disconnection, it is better thought of as a continuum. Here, the instigating actor determines the extent participation is reduced.[96]

Polycentric East Asian Order

To explain how the different components of my theoretical framework fit together, I employ a dramaturgical metaphor. Exploring order through the language of performance

[92] Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988): 377.
[93] Claudia Mills, "Politics and Manipulation," *Social Theory and Practice* 21, no. 1 (1995): 100.
[94] Robert Noggle, "Manipulative Actions: A Conceptual and Moral Analysis," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (1996): 44.
[95] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self*, 67.
[96] Deon Geldenhuys, *Isolated States: A Comparative Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 2-3.

conveys how actors present themselves based on the structural norms of a given society informing appropriate behaviour. Conduct is geared towards securing acceptance by other actors. Erving Goffman defines a theatrical vision of order as

> all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants… The pre-established pattern of action which is unfolded during a performance and which may be presented or played through on other occasions may be called a "part" or "routine."[97]

While mitigated by the fact it is a theoretical abstraction illuminating the structure of social encounters, a dramaturgical metaphor is not without problems.[98] Whether performances extend 'off-stage' raise broader questions of where they can be located and what activity they encompass. It raises questions on where a performed role ends and actors themselves begin. Furthermore, a dramaturgical metaphor is difficult to see extending to international order as it has been argued this metaphor better reflects the closed-off social environment of total institutions.[99] These criticisms nevertheless align with this project's focus on tensions within order. Questions of where performances begin and end are addressed by the fact actors in early modern East Asia undertook different performances in distinct locations. Performances are tied to specific sites which are in turn closed-off. While their ramifications are system-wide, formal diplomatic performances themselves occurred in relative isolation at the micro-level. Likewise, tensions between formal meanings and subjective understandings communicate the differences between an actor in a role and how they understood this performance. Thus, dramaturgy effectively conveys the social dynamics of polycentric East Asian order.

A dramaturgical metaphor best conveys how hierarchy operated in early modern East Asia. As discussed earlier, hierarchy did not result in the loss of political autonomy but rather formalised status within hierarchy by acknowledging its authority claims and normative agenda. Framing encounters between actors as interaction rituals captures that it is ongoing performances that reconfirms understandings of identity within hierarchy. These are not abstract to actors whose participation in these staged micro-level encounters constitute how

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[97] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, xxvii-xxviii.
[98] Robin Williams, "Sociological Tropes: A Tribute to Erving Goffman," *Theory, Culture and Society* 2 (1983): 101.
[99] Bruce Wilshire, "The Dramaturgical Model of Behavior: Its Strengths and Weaknesses," *Symbolic Interaction* 5, no. 2 (1982): 287-298.

order is experienced and the nature of their relationship to others. Thus, each actor's hierarchical order was an effort to organise their relations so interaction rituals confirmed their understanding in practice. As interaction rituals are performed, participation does not require genuine belief even as they are successful. Nevertheless, these mutually exclusive stagings of order generated tensions that could not easily be ignored.

Segmentation of space explains how different interaction rituals constituting hierarchy endure without convergence. Continuing this dramaturgical metaphor, the spaces established by segmentation constituted the stages on which actors could choreograph and orchestrate interaction rituals on their terms without consideration of what occurred elsewhere. Thus, actors predominant in their space confirmed meanings through the sites diplomatic activities occurred within. In doing so, space took on greater meaning for the actor engaged in spatial organisation as place. While the former denoted an abstracted and undifferentiated location waiting for meaning to be attached, place emerges through interaction and greater acquaintance.[100] Rather than a universal notion on the forms and understandings associated with a space, it is the particular narratives conveyed by actors that result in their distinctiveness.[101] This sense of place is central to creating order as it involves "a concentration of our intentions, our attitudes, purposes, and experience… Places are thus basic elements in the ordering of our experiences of the world."[102] Nevertheless, place is a subjective notion experienced differently by actors. Edward Relph gives the example of several nomadic camps inhabiting the same space at different times with each producing their own conception of place based on their unique experience within it.[103] Since places are infused with meaning and purpose, control over them can allow one to set the conditions on what is appropriate or permissible making acts of transgression within them direct acts of contestation.[104] Indeed, as this control was not absolute, actors proved willing to contest performances of interaction rituals based on their own interests.

Performance strategies represented how actors managed their participation within the interaction rituals taking place in different spaces. This allowed them to distance themselves

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[100] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977): 6; Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976): 8-29.
[101] Edward W. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical Essay* (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1998): xii-xiii.
[102] Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 43.
[103] Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 29-30.
[104] Timothy Cresswell, *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 163-175.

from authority claims and normative agendas beyond their space that challenged their understandings. The juxtaposition between formal meanings and subjective understandings of interaction rituals is akin to the process of actors interpreting a script within a dramaturgical metaphor. Scripts differ in the extent to which actors can draw their own interpretations and express them in practice.[105] Therefore, it is in performances that actors are able to convey their interpretation of interaction rituals. As it is performed in the moment, attention is dedicated to its transmission to particular audiences and how it is received.[106] If formal meanings constitute the scripts and the desired meanings of interaction rituals, it is the subjective understandings that are conveyed in the dispositions of actors in performances. Difficulty in circumnavigating interaction rituals conveying hierarchy as these formed the only means relationships between actors could be staged within particular spaces, performance strategies offered East Asian actors a means to assert their understandings. Outside in spaces beyond their control, performance strategies allowed for transgression in expected performances and mitigate the challenges posed to ontological security. Conversely, on the inside of their spaces performance strategies could be used to align interaction rituals with their desired understanding and prevent others from deviating. Together, a dramaturgical metaphor captures how rival order-building projects were staged to ensure their contradictions never came to the fore.

Conclusion

This chapter puts forward a theoretical framework explaining how competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas between the rival order-building projects of early modern East Asia are resolved. It continues efforts in IR to advance a framework moving away from Sinocentric conceptions by situating the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects alongside those of Chinese dynasties. Rather than look at how they contested status in an overarching Chinese hierarchy, it instead looks at their simultaneous efforts to construct hierarchy and the resulting formation arising from this process. The outcome is polycentric hierarchy – the intersection and overlap of efforts to construct hierarchy based on competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas. Compared

[105] David E. Apter, "Politics as Theatre: An Alternative View of the Rationalities of Power," in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, eds. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 227.
[106] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: Experiencing Flow in Work and Play* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000): 53-54.

with previous approaches in historical Asian IR, it conceives of hierarchy without a shared organising logic. Order-building projects of East Asia in this period did not seek convergence as their interests were better served by the absence of resolution. Hierarchy did not account for East Asia's long-term stability but instead this long-term stability required explanation. As the simultaneous pursuit of hierarchy produces tensions, this project introduces spatial organisation as an explanation.

The segmentation of space is employed by actors to distance their competing order-building projects which constitute polycentric hierarchy. Doing so hides inherent tensions existing in such a formation. Enforcing a clear inside/outside dynamic, it allows for actors to dictate when, where, and how interactions with other actors take place within these spaces by organising them on hierarchical lines. It results in segmentation as inside this particular space the actor establishes a logic of appropriateness reflecting their authority claims and normative agenda. As such, spatial organisation provides the foundation that allows for polycentric hierarchy to endure. However, issues of actors taking on competing statuses within the different hierarchies of this formation remains an issue. Interaction rituals provide a framework to reconceptualise the relationship between authority and the organisation of interactions. Constituted through these ongoing interactions, legitimate acceptance of the claims surrounding a hierarchy was unnecessary. Rather the ability to mobilise actors in the performance of an understanding as seen in micro-practices structured interactions hierarchically. Yet rather than settled accounts of interaction rituals as put forward in IR, I identify the tensions existing between formal meanings and subjective understandings which actors had difficulty managing. These are managed, but never resolved, through performance strategies – confrontation, accommodation, manipulation, and avoidance. Employed during interactions at the micro-level of international relations, they seek to alter the nature of these encounters to better align with an actor's understanding of their status. They represent a form of role distancing, seeking to create a discrepancy between the performed role and an actor's understood identity. Except for confrontation, each of these strategies does not seek to extenuate tensions, but instead allow for competing efforts to co-exist.

Chapter Three – The Tokugawa Order-Building Project

In 1611, the Tokugawa bakufu (1603-1868) dispatched a letter to the Wanli Emperor seeking to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Ming.[1] With no formal contact occurring since the 1547 trade mission to Ningbo, relations had been severed following Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasion of the Korean peninsula (1592-1598).[2] With no direct channels of communication, the bakufu passed the letter on to the authorities in Fujian via Ryukyu. While the letter never reached its intended audience, its contents represent the clearest expression of the Tokugawa understanding of East Asian order in this period.[3] Here, advisor Hayashi Razan positioned Tokugawa Ieyasu as having:

> cultivated the archipelago assiduously, handled both civil and military affairs successfully, and followed the cardinal guides and constant virtues, respecting inherited ways and drawing on the lessons of the past. These efforts have brought about a prosperous state and a wealthy people, with surplus revenue sufficient for a decade. Customs change, but the ways of the three ancient dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou are followed. The transforming influence of the shogun spreads so far that the Joseon Kingdom pays tribute and the Ryukyu Kingdom has become a vassal state, and other heads or chiefs of barbarian countries, such as Annam, Cochin, Champa, Siam, Luzon, the Western Ocean and Cambodia, have all sent letters and envoys to pay homage. In these circumstances, our admiration for China has increased and we cherish a yet more earnest hope of establishing a peaceful relationship.[4]

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[1] Better known as the 'Shogunate' in Western historiography, the term bakufu translates literally as 'tent government' and refers to the ruling shōgun's office. While existing historically, it did not enter widespread usage in Japan until the mid-nineteenth century. In late Tokugawa Japan's turmoil, use of the term bakufu emphasised the shōgun was a servant of the emperor, an understanding downplayed by the Tokugawa during their rule wherein they expressed an autonomous basis for their authority. Hiroshi Watanabe, "About Some Japanese Historical Terms," trans. Luke S. Roberts, *Sino-Japanese Studies* 10, no. 2 (1998): 32-37.

[2] Joshua A. Fogel, *Articulating the Sinosphere: Sino-Japanese Relations in Space and Time* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009): 113.

[3] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 59-60.

[4] Hayashi Razan, *Hayashi Razan Bunshu*, vol. 1, (Tokyo: Perikansha Publishing Inc., 1979) pp. 130-131, Quoted in Jiadong Yuan, "Satsuma's Invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom and Changes in the Geopolitical Structure of East Asia," trans. Huang Yusheng, *Social Sciences in China* 34, no. 4 (2013): 134.

Expressed here is a claim of equality by the shōgun. It denied Chinese centrality by ignoring formalities around diplomatic correspondence acknowledging an East Asian hierarchy situating the Ming emperor solely at its apex.[5]

Whether this vision of order was an accurate reflection is irrelevant. Communicated is an authority claim and normative agenda irreconcilable with those of other actors in this period. While IR acknowledges the existence of a competing Japanocentric hierarchy in early modern East Asia, it nevertheless stresses its inability to supplant China materially and normatively. Characterised as a "reluctant part of the Chinese world", following Hideyoshi's attempted invasion of China through Korea (discussed in greater detail in the penultimate chapter), Japan never directly challenged China again.[6] Ji-Young Lee notes Japanese efforts to construct order derived from the 'symbolic dominance' of East Asian cultural scripts as Japan proved unable to construct an alternate symbology.[7] These positions reveal two assumptions around the Tokugawa order-building project – Japan never challenged successive Chinese order-building projects and that their normative agenda could merely emulate existing interaction rituals structuring relations between East Asian actors.

While not inaccurate, these assumptions overlook two aspects of the Tokugawa order. First, their construction of order was built on a foundation employing force. The Tokugawa conquest of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1609 and colonisation of Ezo (Hokkaido) from the seventeenth century demonstrates a willingness to use violence to assert their order. These did not represent zero-sum challenges for supremacy but nevertheless occurred at odds with other order-building projects. Second, beliefs the Tokugawa order only emulated East Asian tributary practices ignored Japan's use of indigenous *bushi* lord-vassal relations reflecting its 'warrior government' status. Martial understandings of interpersonal relations emerging from the Sengoku period (1467-1600) formed the basis of Japan's hierarchical ordering of actors. The personalised relationship between daimyō (literally 'great name') and shōgun served as the model. Thus, both Joseon and Ryukyu found the interaction rituals performed in Edo (present-day Tokyo) more in-line with those of the samurai houses than those undertaken in

[5] Ronald P. Toby, "Contesting the Centre: International Sources of Japanese National Identity," *The International History Review* 7, no. 3 (1985): 352-353.
[6] David C. Kang and Xinru Ma, "Power Transitions: Thucydides Didn't Live in East Asia," *The Washington Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2018): 141.
[7] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 112-113, 146-147.

the Forbidden City. They were incorporated both as vassals bound to the shōgun like daimyō just as they were foreign tributary kingdoms.[8]

As the actor 'most-likely' to diverge from Sinocentric understandings of hierarchical order, the Tokugawa order-building project demonstrates the utility of polycentric hierarchy as a typology capturing overlap between competing orders. The normative agenda of the Tokugawa order-building project took a syncretic approach when incorporating Shinto and Buddhism alongside established Neo-Confucian frameworks in early modern East Asia.[9] Through segmentation, Tokugawa Japan established interaction rituals establishing a logic of appropriateness in their space recognising their authority claims and normative agenda in practice. At the centre was the bakuhan system, characterised by Erik Ringmar as an international order in and of itself.[10] Here, daimyō served as hereditary vassals of the Tokugawa shōgun in the aftermath of Japan's final unification in 1615 following the Siege of Osaka. As regional warlords exercising de-facto control over Japan during the Sengoku period following the collapse of the preceding Muromachi bakufu, the country was administratively divided into various domains ruled by the daimyō. Their relative autonomy meant daimyō participated in the same interaction rituals as foreign actors and a select few operated within the international system by maintaining relations with foreign actors.

I argue the Tokugawa order-building project not only avoided acknowledging their counterparts ruling in China but was most successful in establishing an alternative hierarchy in East Asia. Here, the *shinkoku* ('Divine Land') ideology provided an alternative basis for expressing authority removed from wider East Asia which stressed Japan to be the historical equal, if not superior, of China. While the Japanese emperor reigning in Kyoto symbolised this belief, the Tokugawa shōguns ruling in Edo marginalised their person to establish themselves as the centre of socio-political authority within Japan on an autonomous basis.[11]

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[8] Travis Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū": Identity Performance and Foreign Relations in Early Modern Japan," PhD Diss., (University of California Santa Barbara, 2019): 212-213.

[9] Often translated into English as 'The Way of the Kami', one of the earliest known appearances of the term Shinto is the eighth century *Nihon Shoki*. Rather than a distinct religion, for much of Japanese history the worship of *kami* and associated practices was entwined with those brought from the mainland including Confucianism and Buddhism. It was only in the seventeenth century that Confucian officials recognised Shinto as a distinct indigenous religion during the Tokugawa bakufu. With the Meiji Restoration and intervention of the state, Shinto practices were separated from their traditional syncretic relationship with Buddhism. Kuroda Toshio, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," trans. James C. Dobbins and Suzanne Gay, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 7, no. 1 (1981): 1-21.

[10] Ringmar, "Performing International Systems," 1-25.

[11] The status of the Japanese emperor was a contentious issue within imperial Japanese historiography as it remains linked irrevocably to its twentieth century imperial project. *Kokutai* beliefs emphasised the Japanese

Their claims were not empty rhetoric – the *sakoku* ('closed country') edicts facilitated the segmentation of space and allowed the Tokugawa to control movement inside. This allowed them to organise relations along hierarchical lines recognising their authority in practice. With their position on the Japanese archipelago providing an advantage by distancing their efforts across the ocean, the Tokugawa successfully incorporated the daimyō, Ainu, Dutch, Chinese, Joseon, and Ryukyu within their order on their terms.

This chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by outlining the historical context of the Tokugawa bakufu. To do so, I highlight antecedents to constructing order by earlier Japanese polities that the Tokugawa drew on. Following this, I outline the institutional basis for the segmentation of space. Practices such as the *sakoku* edicts establishing maritime controls as well as domestic controls in the form of *sankin kotai* ('alternate attendance') among others demonstrate the importance of spatial organisation to constructing order. As an example, I briefly look at how spatial organisation facilitated Ezo's colonisation. Next, I introduce both my sub-cases exploring how Tokugawa Japan managed relations with two actors – Joseon and Ryukyu. Here, I outline the historical context of their relationship and the nature of the interaction rituals constituting formal diplomacy. Then, I identify how performance strategies managed contradictions between rival order-building projects.

Historical Context

In undertaking its order-building project, Tokugawa Japan drew on earlier precedents in legitimising their order. Both cosmopolitan and nativist streams of thought, while not representing a hard binary, demonstrated the spectrum Japanese thinking took place on. Here, a push and pull faced successive Japanese rulers as the normative agenda on which their authority claims rested alternated between drawing on indigenous beliefs and the wider cultural framework of East Asia. Likewise, practices evolving around these beliefs were continually modified over the years to respond to challenges facing the construction of order at the time. In this section, I briefly chart this dynamic across Japanese history. First, I

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nation's exceptionalism derived from the emperor's divinity. Historiography emphasised that irrespective of actual political power, the emperor had been a figure of veneration across Japanese society throughout history. Such accounts overlooked that for much of Japanese history the emperor was a marginal figure both politically and symbolically. Rulers such as the Tokugawa exercised their authority independent of reference to their person. These sensitivities were displayed in 1933 when Emeritus Professor Mikami Sanji welcomed a new class of history majors to Tokyo Imperial University with a warning when studying the emperor – "You're going to study true history here; just don't teach it to your pupils after you become teachers." Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, "In Name Only: Imperial Sovereignty in Early Modern Japan," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 17, no. 1 (1991): 25-57.

highlight how the Yamato polity syncretised East Asian ideologies with indigenous beliefs to justify and expand their authority on the Japanese archipelago. Second, with the emergence of military governments in Japan, I highlight the growing necessity of rulers avoiding the perception of subordination to China to legitimise their authority. Third, I look at the process of unification during the Sengoku Period and how these precedents formed the basis for Tokugawa authority claims and normative agenda. Together they establish the precedents shaping the Tokugawa worldview.

Syncretisation of wider East Asian ideologies within the milieu of local Japanese beliefs originated with the Yamato polity. From the late sixth to early eighth century, the Yamato imported ideological resources and adapted associated practices to fit their context. To centralise power, the imperial court established what historians term the *Ritsuryō* system. Attributed to the Taika Reforms promulgated by Emperor Kōtoku in 645 and the Taihō Code in 703, it drew on Confucian and Legalist philosophies and modelled their system on the Tang.[12] This is reflected in the new capital of Heian-kyo (later Kyoto) constructed in 794 "for the express purpose of serving as an inert venue of imperial government and ritual".[13] Heian-kyo severed regional elite's from provincial bases of wealth and status, requiring their presence in government and rituals recognising the emperor's authority.[14] Japan's nativist stream also originated in this period and came to be known as *shinkoku* ideology which stressed their superiority. First recorded within the *Nihon Shoki* ('The Chronicles of Japan') in 720, it asserted "a simple religious belief in divine protection, to complex doctrines on the sacrality of particular shrines, to political thought relating to the imperial throne and imperial rule."[15] Prince Shōtoku's letter to Emperor Yang of Sui in 607 reflect this, opening with the greeting "From the sovereign of the land of the rising sun to the sovereign of the land of the setting sun".[16] Unsurprisingly, the Sui considered this obstinate.[17] The example of the Yamato

[12] Bruce L. Batten, "Foreign Threat and Domestic Reform: The Emergence of the Ritsuryō State," *Monumenta Nipponica* 41, no. 2 (1986): 199.
[13] Matthew Stavros, *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japan's Premodern Capital* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014): xviii.
[14] Stavros, *Kyoto*, 3.
[15] Kuroda Toshio, "The Discourse on the "Land of the Kami" (Shinkoku) in Medieval Japan: National Consciousness and International Awareness," trans. Fabio Rambelli, *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 3-4 (1996): 354.
[16] Varley, *Japanese Culture*, 24.
[17] Indeed, the response letter from Emperor Yang addressed the Japanese emperor as 'King of Japan', forcing the Japanese envoy to alter the title back to 'Emperor of Japan' during his return trip. As will be seen almost a millennium later, Japanese envoys had a long history of altering diplomatic correspondence to align with their desired terminology. Etsuko Hae-Jin Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations: From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London: Palgrave, 1997): 43.

polity highlights how Japanese adaptation of East Asian ideologies did not preclude their use to contest understandings of order.

The emergence of military government allowing warriors to come to the fore of political order represented another antecedent for the Tokugawa. By the time of the Muromachi bakufu (1338-1573), the imperial family no longer directly ruled, instead providing a nominal legitimating function to a warrior government that nevertheless sought to rule in their own right.[18] Even as this became the norm, limitations on central power and authority remained. The coalition between shōgun and provincial vassals appointed as *shugo* (military-governor) was a *fait accompli* formalising the positions of local families within their existing powerbases.[19] In legitimising their authority, the shōgun sought an independent basis rather than relying on the Japanese emperor or their Chinese counterpart for investiture. Ji-Young Lee notes Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's investiture as 'King of Japan' by China in 1404, even nominally to access trade, was domestically unpopular.[20] Indeed, Yoshimitsu constructed his own ritual apparatus to legitimate his authority, emulating the dharma kings of Southeast Asia. Through the "mandalization of space", notions of sacred geography were deployed, drawing connections between Yoshimitsu and the divine through his ambitious plans to redesign Kyoto.[21] This most prominently seen through Yoshimitsu's retirement villa, Kitayama-dono which saw two branch temples of the Shingon and Tendai schools constantly perform rituals recognising his status as dharma king while simultaneously serving as the space receiving foreign envoys.[22] This need by successive warrior governments to establish their authority on an autonomous basis both domestically and internationally would form a through line to the Tokugawa.

Emerging from an extended period of conflict, the Tokugawa bakufu faced significant challenges establishing the basis for a hierarchical order that would endure for over two centuries. The Sengoku Period left Japan the site of incessant fighting between rival lords, a

[18] John W. Hall, "The Muromachi Power Structure," Chap. 3 in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, ed. John W. Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2010): 39.
[19] Kawai Masaharu, "Shogun and Shugo: The Provincial Aspects of Muromachi Politics," Chap. 6 in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, ed. John W. Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2010): 65-66.
[20] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 68.
[21] Matthew Stavros, "Monuments and Mandalas in Medieval Kyoto: Reading Buddhist Kingship in the Urban Plan of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 77, no. 2 (2017): 353-356.
[22] Stavros, "Monuments and Mandalas in Medieval Kyoto," 356.

situation exploited by the arrival of Portuguese traders and missionaries in 1543.[23] This disunity left Japanese rulers struggling to control actors within Japan as well as dictate the terms on which foreign relations occurred. Centralisation under the Three Great Unifiers – Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu was not just enforcing material control, but the expression of an independent authority conceptualised through the term *kōgi*. Subordinate to neither imperial court nor daimyō, it expressed the shōgun's formal authority to intercede in their vassal's domains based on the country's interest rather than solely in problems derived from their status as military lords. This established interaction rituals formalising such a hierarchy.[24] Having established order domestically, the Tokugawa sought to have their position recognised by establishing equal relations with China following Hideyoshi's invasions. A series of letters from 1611 to 1625 unsuccessfully sought to position the Japanese emperor as the 'Son of Heaven in Kyoto', challenging universal claims by Chinese emperors while avoiding use of the Ming calendar (thereby refuting their claim to centrality). By ignoring diplomatic formalities, it avoided positioning itself as subordinate.[25]

In contrast to the international situation, with the establishment of Edo as the capital in 1603 the foundations of the Tokugawa order-building project were lain. Known as the Great Peace, it brought lasting stability to Japan by establishing political institutions managing relations between shōgun and daimyō. Termed the bakuhan system (a portmanteau of 'bakufu' and 'han'), it divided the country into *han* ('domain') ruled by daimyō. The number of domains fluctuated between 185 in Tokugawa Ieyasu's early reign before stabilising around 260. Despite continuity in location and administration, it is possible to locate 540 individual domains at different points throughout the bakufu's history.[26] Codified rules governing conduct under bakufu authority through the *buke shohatto* (Laws of the Military Houses) issued in 1615 placed restrictions on activities that could form the basis of an opposing coalition.[27] Furthermore, daimyō were stratified hierarchically into three categories based on their ancestor's relationship to Tokugawa Ieyasu prior to the Battle of

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[23] John Whitney Hall, Nagahara Keiji and Kozo Yamamura, "Introduction," in *Japan Before Tokugawa: Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500-1650*, eds. John Whitney Hall, Nagahara Keiji and Kozo Yamamura (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1981): 7-9.
[24] Asao Naohiro and Bernard Susser, "The sixteenth-century unification," Chap. 2 in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 4: Early Modern Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 89-95.
[25] Toby, "Reopening the Question of Sakoku," 332-336.
[26] "Han," in *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan, Volume 3* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983): 92.
[27] Philip C. Brown, *Central Authority and Local Autonomy in the Formation of Early Modern Japan* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993): 8.

Sekigahara in 1600. Allies early in his rise to power were termed *fudai*, while those opposed or having been opportunistic termed *tozama*. Finally, relatives not part of the main Tokugawa line were termed *shinpan* or *kamon*.[28] Perhaps most importantly, these efforts to establish authority and the normative agenda to legitimise it inside Japan would form the basis on which the Tokugawa would incorporate foreign actors within its order.

Institutional Basis for the Segmentation of Space

Segmentation was central role in pursuing the Tokugawa order-building project within East Asia's wider polycentric hierarchy. While only twelve Korean and twenty-one Ryukyuan embassies arrived over the 265 years of the Tokugawa bakufu, segmentation allowed these processions to convey a status in-line with Japan's normative agenda.[29] Tokugawa Japan successfully bounded a space wherein interaction rituals reflected its logic of appropriateness. Furthermore, the distance of the Japanese archipelago from the East Asian mainland made segmentation far more successful compared with others. These approaches, both international and domestic, focused on preserving the Tokugawa order against competing order-building projects and are seen through the following institutions. First, I locate an inside/outside dynamic within Japanese thinking surrounding order management. Second, I highlight how the *sakoku* edicts dictated the terms external trade with Japan occurred. Third, controlling internal movement established rules of conduct around travel recognising their authority in practice as different requirements stratified actors into different statuses throughout the Tokugawa hierarchy. Fourth, segmentation allowed the bakufu to balance daimyō autonomy against their authority by establishing overall standards on conduct within domains (*buke shohattō*) and interaction rituals between them (*sankin kotai*). I conclude by providing a spatial perspective on the colonisation of Ezo and relations with the Ainu to reinforce the importance of segmentation to order building.

[28] Mark Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999): 17-18.

[29] Of the Korean embassies to Edo, not all were considered *Joseon tongsinsa*. Indeed, the first three embassies in 1607, 1617, and 1624 were explicitly identified by Joseon as 'Reply and Prisoner Repatriation Envoys' that were considerably less formal. Similarly, in counting the number of Ryukyuan embassies, the submission of the captured King Shō Nei following the 1609 invasion is recorded as an embassy. Likewise, it considers the embassies dispatched in 1644 to be separate when counting. James B. Lewis, *Frontier Contact Between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan* (London: Routledge, 2010): 21-24; Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 36-37, 48-49.

An inside/outside perspective in Japanese thinking provides an understanding of situated identity forming the basis for social order.[30] Concepts such as *omote-ura* ('front-back') and *uchi-soto* ('in-out'), while initially used in culturally determinist arguments, nevertheless help in contextualising spatial practices.[31] Indeed, Luke Roberts argues two understandings of social order existed under the Tokugawa. *Omote*, translated as 'surface' or 'interface', describes the location of ritualised interactions between superior and inferior compelling a performance in-line with a superior's authority. In contrast, *uchi*, translated as 'inside', acknowledges a space of authority for an inferior. Connecting these were *naishō* ('inside agreement') serving as confidential understandings not revealed in *omote* situations.[32] The possibility of such acts within formal politics was expressed through the language of spatial metaphors, particularly a form of governmental organization contemporaneous thinkers termed *hōken*. This consisted of "delegated and "sealed-off spaces" of governance" wherein 'interiors' and 'exteriors' were incongruent. Daimyō simultaneously held conflicting identities so long as space was arranged to ensure a division between 'inside' and 'outside' and maintained formal rituals of submission to the centre.[33] While the Tokugawa order understood daimyō authority was delegated from the shōgun, within their own domains they ruled at odds with the bakufu, justifying such acts on a public authority positioning them as rulers of countries independent of reference to Edo.[34]

By controlling foreign interactions through the *sakoku* edicts, the Tokugawa legitimised their hegemony through a logic of appropriateness shaping interaction rituals inside through maritime controls. Five edicts issued from 1633 to 1639 banned Japanese from travelling abroad and sailing to foreign ports, ensuring the bakufu a trade monopoly. Furthermore, while anti-Christian policies curtailed a rival ideological system challenging their authority, this concern was heightened by the fact most converts were located in Kyushu where the last daimyō to resist the Tokugawa resided.[35] This bolstered the shōgun's authority

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[30] Jane M. Bachnik, "Introduction: *Uichi/Soto*: Challenging Our Conceptualizations of Self, Social Order, and Language," Chap. 1 in *Situated Meaning: Inside and Outside in Japanese Self, Society, and Language*, eds. Jane M. Bachnik and Charles J. Quinn Jr. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994): 3-4.
[31] Takeshi Ishida, "Conflict and its Accommodation: Omote-Ura and Uichi-Soto Relations," Chap. 2 in *Conflict in Japan*, eds. Ellis S. Krauss, Thomas P. Rohlen and Patricia G. Steinhoff (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1984): 16-18.
[32] Luke Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace: Political Space and Open Secrets in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012): 6-7.
[33] Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, 5-6.
[34] Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, 24-26.
[35] Michael S. Laver, *The Sakoku Edicts and the Politics of Tokugawa Hegemony* (Amherst, New York: Cambria Press, 2011): 79.

as their ability to dictate when, where, and how foreign actors entered the country legitimised their position.[36] It sanctioned relations with four countries – China, Korea, Ryukyu, and the Netherlands at sites constituting the 'Four Gateways'.[37] While controlling foreign relations, it delegated day-to-day management to specific daimyō while placing Nagasaki under bakufu jurisdiction. Here, private Chinese traders and the Dutch East India Company operated in Nagasaki, the Matsumae clan monopolised trade with the Ainu in Hokkaido, the Sō clan of Tsushima managed Korean relations, while the Shimazu clan ruling Satsuma controlled Ryukyu. Consequently, while the bakufu remained hegemonic, foreign relations required negotiation over competing interests.[38] As Ronald Toby highlights "the skilful construction and manipulation of relations with neighbors abroad can be molded into a language which transcends and transforms reality into a mechanism for the maintenance of some desired worldview."[39] For example, the Tokugawa bakufu positioned even the Qing as subordinates despite no formal contact, forcing private vessels to carry *shinpai* (trading licenses) in order to trade at Nagasaki. Chinese merchants performed in-line with Japanese understandings, stripping them of their symbolic status despite protests.[40] These interactions situated Japan at the centre, limiting the ability of foreign actors to shape interaction rituals between them.

Within Japan itself, the bakufu established controls over movement as part of its order-building project situating the right to travel under their authority. The creation of a centralised road network allowed for the oversight of travel between domains and Edo through interaction rituals, confirming their military supremacy by conveying movement as marshalling the forces of the shōgun's vassals. Known as the 'Five Routes' (Gokaidō), it connected the main island of Honshu. In practice, controls did not 'isolate' domains as travel occurred with minimal restraints. Nevertheless, these controls acknowledged bakufu authority in practice by requiring permission, no matter how nominal, to do so.[41] For example, the Tōkaidō highway facilitating travel between Kyoto and Edo maintained fifty-three post stations mandatory for travellers to visit and required travel permits at checkpoints.[42] As will be discussed further below, these domestic controls extended into the

[36] Toby, "Reopening the Question of Sakoku," 327-329.
[37] Kazui, "Foreign Relations During the Edo Period," 288-292.
[38] Hellyer, *Defining Engagement*, 4-6.
[39] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 231.
[40] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 197-201.
[41] Constantine N. Vaporis, "Linking the Realm: The Gokaidō Highway Network in Early Modern Japan," Chap. 4 in *Highways, Byways, and Road Systems in the Pre-Modern World*, eds. Susan Alcock, John Bodel, and Richard Talbert (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012): 90-94.
[42] Vaporis, "Linking the Realm," 95-100.

treatment extended to different embassies. For example, even crossing a river signified the status assigned to actors. The bakufu extended the privilege of constructing temporary pontoon bridges at crossings for the shōgun himself, Korean embassies, imperial courtiers, and heads of Tokugawa branch families. In contrast, daimyō processions and Ryukyuan embassies were forced to hire porters to carry them or cross aboard ferries.[43] Similarly, as Kyoto housed the imperial family it was forbidden for daimyō and their retainers to enter in order to prevent potential alliances.[44] However, as a sign of respect, the bakufu extended the privilege of entering Kyoto to Joseon whereas Ryukyu was forbidden, reinforcing their lower status as Satsuma's retainer.[45]

Through segmentation, the bakufu managed daimyō autonomy by imposing countrywide standards on their conduct. Following the Siege of Osaka and defeat of the rival Toyotomi clan in 1615, the *buke shohatto* established codes of conduct within domains. Upon the succession of a new shōgun, daimyō were summoned to Edo and as part of the ceremonies had the laws read to them to establish new bonds of fealty.[46] These expanded on the *ikkoku ichijō* ('one castle per domain') edict issued earlier that year allowing castle repairs but restricting design innovations and prohibiting expansions. It restricted movement by forbidding contact between domains (later removed) with specific requirements marriages among daimyō occur publically. Finally, a Confucian morality permeated the *buke shohatto*, establishing normative standards through sumptuary laws determining appropriate clothing and conduct.[47] In 1635, Tokugawa Iemitsu expanded the original laws from thirteen to twenty-one, controlling spatial organisation by forbidding daimyō to create toll barriers or establish embargoes on highways running through their domain while simultaneously

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[43] Satō Kenji, *Chōsen tsūshinshi Ryūkyū shisetsu no Nikkō mairi* (Utsunomiya, Tochigi: Zuisōsha, 2007), 27. Cited in Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū," 81.

[44] Constantine N. Vaporis, *Tour of Duty: Samurai, Military Service in Edo, and the Culture of Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010): 51.

[45] There are some cases in which members of Ryukyuan embassies entered Kyoto. However unlike Joseon embassies in which such a visit was standard, Ryukyu's entry proved the exception rather than the rule. Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 76-79.

[46] These were not static laws but revised and expanded over the lifetime of the Tokugawa bakufu. Custom dictated they be reissued upon the accession of a new shōgun to power. Significant revisions or amendments to the *Buke Shohatto* occurred in 1629, 1635, 1663, and 1710. While no major change occurred in 1683, the Tokugawa shifted from employing the syntactical order associated with Chinese ideographs to *kana-majiri* that mixed *kanji* (Chinese characters) with *hiragana* (a Japanese syllabary). Minor revisions occurred at other times but did not significantly alter earlier promulgations. John C. Hall, *Japanese Feudal Law* (Washington D.C.: University Publications of America, 1979): 288-308.

[47] 'Code for the Warrior Households (*Buke Shohatto*)' in *Sources of Japanese Tradition: Volume 2, 1600-2000*, 2nd Edition, Compiled by Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck and Arthur E. Tiedemann (New York: Colombia University Press, 2006): 12-14.

charging them with their upkeep. Furthermore, it established the *sankin kotai* system requiring daimyō to reside in Edo for four months of every year or every other year. Wives, heirs, and other adolescent children resided permanently as effective hostages.[48] Key to its effectiveness was mobilising daimyō in performing the shōgun's authority, as while nominally a military exercise, their procession to Edo displayed the power of the bakufu before elites and the wider Japanese population.[49] Simultaneously, these imposed significant material costs as mobilisation consumed fifty to seventy-five percent of a daimyō's income.[50]

Conversely, segmentation allowed daimyō to situate their authority independent of the bakufu and maintain autonomy inside while recognising the shōgun's authority outside. In practice, the daimyō ruled three-quarters of Japan directly within their domains. Indeed, borders maintained by the daimyō reflected a territorial order within Japan centred on clear demarcation and mutual exclusion.[51] They replicated most features of governance including mobilising armies and police (under the restrictions of *buke shohatto*) and established their own legal codes and currency. Indeed, while the shōgun claimed authority over foreign affairs, only one-third of Japan fell under his direct financial control.[52] De-facto autonomy was tolerated by Edo, allowing contradictions to its authority on the inside provided this did not interfere with interaction rituals performed outside. For example, in 1792 the Tokugawa Grand Inspector sought to determine if daimyō Miyake Yasukuni was competent in selecting his younger brother as heir as he was without children. Approving this decision, the shōgun not long after received news Miyake had passed shortly after. Yet internal documents of Tahara domain record the daimyō passing away fifty-five days earlier than the date provided to the shōgun. As hundreds of retainers stood to lose their position if no heir was produced, both parties collaborated to hide this and maintain stability.[53] This reflects inside expressions of authority independent of relations to the shōgun. Terms such as *kōgi-sama* denoting the head of a government, *kimi* ('prince'), *seikun* ('divine prince'), and even *taiju* ('great general') that officially could only be used by the shōgun nevertheless found themselves

[48] Harold Bolitho, "The *han*," Chap. 5 in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 4: Early Modern Japan*, ed. John W. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 194-195; George Sansom, *A History of Japan, 1615-1867* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1963): 20-21.
[49] Constantine N. Vaporis, "Lordly Pageantry: The Daimyo Procession and Political Authority," *Japan Review* 17 (2005): 3-5.
[50] Vaporis, *Tour of Duty*, 2-3.
[51] Naosuke Mukoyama, "The Eastern cousins of European sovereign states? The development of linear borders in early modern Japan," *European Journal of International Relations* 29, no. 2 (2023): 255-282.
[52] Ravina, *Land and Lordship*, 16-19.
[53] Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, 1-2.

employed inside. Furthermore, despite prohibitions, many daimyō underwent deification upon death which successors used to legitimise their authority.[54] For the bakufu, segmentation allowed for the management of order by keeping contradictory efforts at a distance. As established by this project, such a dynamic was symptomatic of how wider polycentric East Asian order managed contradictions.

A spatial perspective on Ezo's colonisation demonstrates how establishing boundaries and a logic of appropriateness facilitates order building. The Matsumae clan found itself invested by the bakufu with a trade monopoly over the Ainu as part of managing relations.[55] Numbering 20,000 to 30,000, the Ainu increasingly found the performance of their identity controlled by the Tokugawa order-building project. While overlooked in wider accounts of East Asian order, the Ainu had historically been international actors, invading Sakhalin Island at the expense of the Nivkh people and resisting Mongol invasions of Ezo in 1263 and 1284 before accepting tributary status in 1309.[56] Consequently, Matsumae actively deprived the Ainu of alternative trading partners, cutting off their relations with China, the Tungus, the Ul'chi and even the Russians as part of their remit in enforcing maritime control policies on behalf of the bakufu.[57] Conflicts such as Shakushain's revolt (1689-1672) and the Menashi-Kunashi Rebellion (1789) between Japanese settlers and the Ainu highlight resistance to such efforts. Control over spatial organisation occurred by dividing Ezo into Wajinchi or 'Japanese Lands' constituting the southern ten percent and Ezochi inhabited by the Ainu in the north constituting the rest. Direct Japanese control formally existed in Wajinchi yet was extended by controlling the terms on which individuals could pass across borders and establishing trading posts outside even if Japanese settlement was forbidden.

Rather than annexation, the Ainu existed in an ambiguous state as interaction rituals created a performance where they played a foreign, autonomous, yet subject group.[58]

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[54] Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, 37-42.

[55] Matsumae held an ambiguous status within the bakuhan system. Gradually incorporated into the bakufu, its distance exempted it from participation in *sankin kotai*. Furthermore, the ruler of Matsumae held the formal title 'Great King of Ezo' alongside daimyo. Matsumae, much like its counterparts in Tsushima and Ryukyu, was treated as a portal to barbarian lands beyond Japanese boundaries. This reflects the historical issues of centralisation facing Japan. Rulers preceding Matsumae on the Tsugaru peninsula in northern Honshu during the earlier Kamakura bakufu (1185-1333) had styled themselves as 'shōgun of Hinomoto' even as they accepted the title of governor from central authorities. Brett L. Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands* (Berkley, California: University of California Press, 2006): 23-25, 39-42; David L. Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity and the Boundaries of the Early Modern Japanese State," *Past & Present* 142, no. 1 (1994): 78-79.

[56] Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 11-12.

[57] Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 15.

[58] Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 39-43.

Enforcing an 'authentic' Ainu culture emphasised their foreign nature vis-à-vis Japan.[59] That the Ainu in Wajinchi had largely assimilated into Japanese culture was irrelevant to Matsumae – formal interactions at Fukuyama Castle mandated differences from their performance.[60] The Tokugawa order appropriated Ainu beliefs to enforce ritual subordination through the custom of *uimam* ('audience') performed during the New Year and upon the succession of new chieftains. In Ezochi, Japanese traders appropriated *umsa* ('greetings'), coercing Ainu workers into displays of submissive gratitude for the 'magnanimity' of their treatment. Whereas Ainu practices conducted these rituals along egalitarian lines, the Japanese used the dressings of 'traditional' customs to perform interaction rituals emphasising their submission. Choreographing a distinct Ainu identity was reinforced through edicts barring adoption of Japanese customs. Mogami Tokunai noted in 1789 that:

> "If [the Ainu] should happen to speak Japanese, the interpreters rebuke them, saying that they have committed an unforgivable offence… In all matters the policy of not allowing the Ezo [Ainu] to adopt Japanese customs is the law of Matsumae house."[61]

Only with the increasing encroachment into surrounding waters by Russia did the bakufu assert direct rule from the nineteenth century.[62] As will be seen, the practices employed in Ezo highlight how Japan conducted relations with the outside world as extensions of what occurred internally.

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[59] Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity," 70-71.

[60] Howell provides the example of Iwanosuke to demonstrate the liminal status of Ainu identity within the Tokugawa order. Living in the eighteenth century, Iwanosuke resided within Kennichi village, having adopted Japanese customs. Yet every New Year he took on the role of an Ainu as it existed in the Japanese imagination, adopting their clothes and growing facial hair to perform submission to the Matsumae. Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity," 79-80; Brett L. Walker, "Foreign Affairs and Frontiers in Early Modern Japan: A Historiographical Essay," *Early Modern Japan: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 10, no. 2 (2002): 51.

[61] Mogami Tokunai, "Ezo no kuni ninjō fūzoku no sata," in *Nihon shomin seikatsu shiryō shūsei*, ed. Takakura Shin'ichirō, 31 vols. (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1968-1984): 460, Quoted in Howell, "Ainu Ethnicity," 85-86.

[62] As internal and external challenges increased, bakufu policies shifted towards assimilating the Ainu. From 1799 to 1806, the bakufu took direct control of southern Ezo and undertook policies including conscripting Ainu men to work for Japanese merchants, 'rewarding' adoption of the Japanese language with food and clothes, and forcibly destroying families by marrying Ainu women to local Japanese merchants against their will. Here, the bakufu's actions formalised what had already been occurring under Matsumae rule and marked the end of using spatial interactions to perform differences in the process of order-building. With the Meiji Restoration, Western understandings of the nation saw Japan formally annex what became Hokkaido. From 1899, Ainu were granted Japanese citizenship to deny their claims to the land as indigenous people. Ann-Elise Lewallen, *The Fabric of Indigeneity: Ainu Identity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism in Japan* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016): 131-142.

Relations with Joseon

Relations between Tokugawa Japan and Joseon Korea highlight how rival order-building projects sought to manage tensions emerging during encounters. Here, the Korean embassies known as the *Joseon tongsinsa* ('Goodwill Missions') represented sites of contestation between both orders. This section proceeds as follows. First, I establish the context of their relationship which informed how Japan perceived Korea. While formal meanings conveyed friendship and equality between rulers, their subjective understandings revealed cultural chauvinism arising from unresolved historical animosities. Second, I outline the nature of interaction rituals constituting formal diplomacy by highlighting how *Joseon tongsinsa* were composed, mobilised, and presented. Here, mutually exclusive interpretations of performances saw both understand their counterpart to be subordinate rather than equal. Third, I show how performance strategies reveal the dispositions of participants as they prioritised asserting subjective understandings over formal meanings. Both employed performance strategies to better align interactions rituals with their understanding. The resulting contestation saw the efficacy of interaction rituals decline over time.

Context

While successive Japanese and Korean polities managed relations between their order-building projects, competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas remained at odds. Following Hideyoshi's invasions both the Tokugawa and Joseon formally recognised the other as equals. Conceived of as *Gyorin* ('Neighbourly Relations') by Joseon, it sought amicable relations with Japan through the *Joseon tongsinsa*. Joseon represented the only actor Tokugawa Japan established peer-relations with, affording it a high status.[63] Nevertheless, behind formal meanings, both actors perceived the other as being their subordinate. The Tokugawa referred to their histories such as the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki* framing the legendary conquest of Korea by the Empress Jingū through the lens of *shinkoku* ideology and formed the basis of Japanese belief in their superiority.[64] While legendary, belief in this narrative was held by successive Japanese polities. Prior to invading, Hideyoshi employed *shinkoku* ideology to legitimise his action, holding numerous ceremonies at shrines

[63] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations*, 137.
[64] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations*, 26.

of the war god Hachiman connected to Empress Jingū.[65] In turn, and discussed further in the following chapter, Joseon's order-building project stressed their excellence in Confucianism against Japan's perceived inferiority. Here, *Joseon tongsinsa* represented 'civilizing missions' to a 'barbarian' land. As Lee highlights, "The exchanges reveal the clear contrast in the two governments' values; Chosŏn's emphasis on civilized culture, and the Tokugawa shogunate's emphasis on military origin. Each side's perception of the pre-eminence of their own culture sharpened this distinction."[66] Contradictory understandings revealed themselves in the disposition of participants at the micro-level of diplomacy between both actors.

Even though open conflict remained rare throughout their history, animosity existed under the surface as fear of its breakdown and potential conflict remained a concern. Initially, the period of state-formation from the fifth to eighth centuries saw Japan and Korea embroiled in conflict once as Yamato entered a conflict embroiling the peninsula.[67] Likewise, the failed Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281 were unique as the subjugated Goryeo provided a base and forcibly conscripted into their war effort. Likewise, Hideyoshi's invasions were a singular event as Japan and Korea never fell into conflict for the remainder of the early modern period.[68] Despite this paucity, memories of conflict remained prominent in practitioner's thinking. Indeed, prior to invasion, the Japanese ambassador negotiating with Joseon stressed they had not forgotten Korea's 'collaboration' with the Mongols in the thirteenth century and held them accountable three centuries later.[69] Following the establishment of relations between the Tokugawa bakufu and Joseon, fears of another Japanese invasion remained prominent. JaHyun Kim Haboush highlights commemorative activities in Joseon at all levels of society saw the invasions remain in the popular consciousness.[70] Furthermore, this is seen in the debate erupting in Joseon's court over proposed protocol reforms prior to dispatching the 1711 embassy. Memory of the invasion weighed heavily on Joseon's decision to accept despite the perceived insults to their status. Resentment towards Japanese 'barbarians' was contrasted with the reality it was not militarily

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[65] Kenneth M. Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail: Ming China and the First Great East Asian War, 1592-1598* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009): 66.
[66] Jeong-Mi Lee, "Amicable Diplomacy? Korean Embassies and Japanese Intellectuals in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Japanese Studies* 39, no. 3 (2019): 368.
[67] Chin-Hao Huang and David C. Kang, "State Formation in Korea and Japan, 400-800 CE: Emulation and Learning, Not Bellicist Competition," *International Organization* 76, no. 1 (2021): 9.
[68] Kang and Ma, "Thucydides Didn't Live in East Asia," 137-154.
[69] Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*, 59.
[70] JaHyun Kim Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, eds. William J. Haboush and Jisoo Kim (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016): 4-5, 19.

capable of resisting if hostilities broke out.[71] Therefore, contestation occurring at the micro-level of diplomacy remained tempered by underlying anxieties from previous conflicts.

Subjective understandings came to the fore in establishing diplomatic relations between Joseon and the Tokugawa bakufu. The letter-forging incident known as the Yanagawa Affair occurring between 1605 and 1634 demonstrates the importance of actions at the micro-level of diplomacy and how actors other than rulers participated. It emerged out of the competing interests of the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Tsushima in restoring relations. Following Hideyoshi's invasions, the Tokugawa struggled to establish relations. While surrendering the 'culprits' behind the vandalisation of Joseon's royal tombs was acceptable, requesting an embassy from Joseon signalled acknowledgement of Japanese defeat in the war.[72] Tsushima's economic difficulties following suspending trade with Joseon and knowledge the bakufu would never admit defeat saw their daimyō and his chief retainers, the Yanagawa family, counterfeit correspondence.[73] A forged opening letter from 1606 recognised the Ming order, using their calendar and altering the shōgun's signature to read 'Tokugawa Ieyasu, King of Japan' positioning the bakufu as a Chinese tributary.[74] While succeeding in establishing the Kiyu Treaty (1609), it required ongoing forging of correspondence to maintain this deception.[75] Joseon recognised this deceit as King Seonjo was aware of Hideyoshi's furious reaction to offers of investiture as 'king' during peace negotiations.[76] The eventual discovery of this affair saw the bakufu appoint Zen monks to oversee Tsushima's drafting of correspondence.[77] Nevertheless, that deception was required to establish relations following conflict conveys the gulf existing between both actors. Rather than resolve their differences, it sought instead to paper over them.

Consequently, both hierarchies found themselves overlapping as they assigned conflicting statuses to the other within their rival order-building projects. Despite the maritime boundary existing between them, efforts to organise interactions on their respective logics of appropriateness generated contradictions requiring management on an ongoing basis. This overlap occurred in two areas – Joseon's *munin* ('access permit') system

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[71] Lee, "Amicable Diplomacy?" 358-360.
[72] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 76-78; Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 22.
[73] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations*, 144.
[74] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 77.
[75] Jeong-Mi Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," (University of Toronto, 2008): 2-3; Lewis, *Frontier Contact Between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan*, 22.
[76] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 77.
[77] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations*, 153-155.

incorporating actors in Western Japan, most prominently Tsushima, within their order and the *Joseon tongsinsa* that formed a major, yet contradictory, component of both order-building projects. The *munin* system represented a major part of the Joseon order-building project, preceding the Tokugawa bakufu and incorporating daimyō and other major regional actors as access to Joseon's ports required recognising their authority. Its centrality to Joseon's order requires that this system be explored in detail in the following chapter. Similarly, the *Joseon tongsinsa* represented an overlap of order-building projects. As the only instance of formal diplomacy, their meaning was at the centre of contestation as both employed performance strategies during these interaction rituals. This meant competing interpretations were drawn, serving as the basis for contradictory understandings of status in both order-building projects.

Nature of Interaction Rituals

Having established the context of the Japan-Korea relationship, this project outlines the nature of formal diplomatic encounters. Centred on the *Joseon tongsinsa*, it demonstrates both the formal meanings of this interaction ritual alongside its operation in practice. Establishing both the formal protocols and practices arising around them allows us to better understand what actors sought to convey when employing performance strategies. To do so, I conceive of diplomatic interactions as occurring in three distinct phases. First, the composition of the *Joseon tongsinsa* will be explored, looking at how Korea selected members and their costumes and paraphernalia to highlight its understood meaning. Second, I explore how embassies were mobilised. Here, I focus on both the various rituals performed as well as how their travel to Edo was facilitated. Third, I outline the presentation of the *Joseon tongsinsa* within the Tokugawa bakufu. Written accounts, artistic depictions, and festivals communicated different understandings of embassies and the status they conveyed for each actor.

The composition of the *Joseon tongsinsa* demonstrates the juxtaposition between the disposition of Korean participants and the logic of appropriateness established by the bakufu. Correspondence requesting the dispatch of an embassy from the Tokugawa avoided formatting letters in-line with Sinocentric understandings appropriate to Joseon. Rather than the calendar of China's reigning dynasty, they employed the mutually understood but normatively ambiguous symbols of the East Asian sexagenary cycle for expediency.[78]

[78] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 94-95.

Likewise, issues surrounding the title of 'king' were overcome by styling the shōgun as 'taikun' (Great Prince), conveying an authority removed from connotations of Chinese investiture. Such an act has been characterised as a "declaration of independence" from the Sinocentric order.[79] For Joseon, this deviation from accepted diplomatic practice reinforced conceptions of Japan as a 'barbaric' land but was acceptable for stabilising relations. Thus, the embassy's composition emphasised their Confucian excellence. These were not small affairs, with the 1763 embassy as an example consisting of 497 people that included "chief and auxiliary envoys, document official, three translating officials with assistants, ten translators, two copyists, a poet, a painter, three doctors, army officers, musicians, horsemen, clerks, captains, pilots, servants, commissariat officials, gift guardians, trumpeters (six for each of the three principal envoys), soldiers and sailors." Travel from Seoul to Edo, while dependent on circumstances, took roughly a year and constituted a 3200-kilometre (2000 miles) trip both ways.[80] Expenses were handled by the bakufu and the supplies Joseon provided to officials were expected to be paid back out of gifts received in Japan.[81] In light of its length and distance, Joseon sought to ensure it could curate its performance, aware formal understandings could be altered once the embassy was isolated deep within Japan.

Control over the mobilisation of embassies allowed for the Tokugawa bakufu to present their identity within their order-building project. Alongside formal performances before the shōgun, encounters on the route to Edo became sites of contention as overseeing the logistics and presentation of the *Joseon tongsinsa* allowed the bakufu to construct Joseon's identity within their order. Here, Joseon's Confucian identity was central key in distinguishing them as foreign. By performing this identity, it conveyed the extent of the shōgun's authority. Departing from Busan, the Joseon embassy was escorted to Tsushima by local officials, where a formal reception with the daimyō occurred. As Tsushima was responsible for maintaining relations with Joseon, the daimyō accompanied the mission and presented them to the shōgun. Up to 1500 men from Tsushima escorted the embassy, a scale dwarfing its size. The image of samurai attendants 'controlling' foreign visitors served as a powerful visualisation of the shōgun's authority and allowed Tsushima to convey greater status in relation to other domains.[82] Having crossed the Tsushima Strait, stopping at the

[79] Toby, "Reopening the Question of Sakoku," 352.
[80] George M. McCune, "The Exchange of Envoys between Korea and Japan during the Tokugawa Period," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (1946): 310-312.
[81] McCune, "The Exchange of Envoys," 310-311.
[82] Nam-lin Hur, "A Korean Envoy Encounters Tokugawa Japan: Shin Yuhan and the Korean Embassy of 1719," *Bunmei* 21, no. 3 (2000): 61-73.

islands of Iki and Ainoshima accompanied by around fifty Japanese ships, they made their way to the Seto Inner Sea following the Chikuzen and Buzen coasts before reaching Osaka, stopping at over ten ports on their way.[83] Unknown to Joseon, this route restricted access to numerous Shinto shrines as for many Japanese it was unthinkable that foreigners could set foot and defile them.[84] Irrespective of formal protocol, controlling routes reflected the Tokugawa logic of appropriateness, mobilising Joseon in performing a subordinate status through these practices.

Travelling along the Yodo River from Osaka to Kyoto, the *Joseon tongsinsa* was provided with ships reserved for use by the shōgun and his retinue. Both the *kōgisen* and *kawagozasen* river ships were markers of status as neither was made available to daimyō or Ryukyuan embassies.[85] From Kyoto, the embassy travelled forty kilometres up the Nakasendō, known as the Chōsenjin kaidō (Korean Highway), visiting cities such as Hikone, Ogaki, and Nagoya. Within Japan, it was considered an auspicious route, as Tokugawa Ieyasu returned to Edo along it following victory at the Battle of Sekigahara. Reserved for the shōgun, it situated Joseon with elite status compared with others within the Tokugawa hierarchy. Nevertheless, such a status was extended by the shōgun as a privilege and reflected his authority.[86] The scale of the embassy required peasants living nearby to be conscripted into pulling the boats carrying the embassy by rope, displaying the manpower available to the shōgun. Alongside conscription, extra taxes for peasants along the embassy's route were levied.[87] These processions imposed financial burdens on the daimyō in western Japan "which had traditionally shown independent tendencies, [and] were painfully reminded of the diplomatic sovereignty of the shogunate."[88] As a result, the *Joseon tongsinsa* provided an

[83] Kwangsik Kim, "Route of the Korean envoys of Chosun Dynasty and their cultural legacy in Japan," (paper presented at 15th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium: "Monuments and sites in their setting – conserving cultural heritage in changing townscapes and landscapes" symposium, Xi'an, 17-21 October 2005; Ronald P. Toby, "Carnival of the Aliens: Korean Embassies in Edo-Period Art and Popular Culture," *Monumenta Nipponica* 41, no. 4 (1986): 420.

[84] An example can be seen in the 1719 embassy where bad weather forced the Koreans to land at Jinoshima. A rural island, its small Buddhist temple could only house the three leading ambassadors while the rest remained on the boats. While the nearby island of Oshima housing the Munakata Shrine was capable of housing the entire embassy, this was considered unacceptable as it represented a sacred symbol of Japan's divine status and was itself considered a *kami*. Nam-lin Hur, "Choson Korean Officials in the Land of Tokugawa Japan: Ethnic Perceptions in the 1719 Korean Embassy," *Korea Observer* 38, no. 3 (2007): 455.

[85] Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 149-150.

[86] Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 150-151.

[87] James B. Lewis, "A Scroll of the 1748 Korean embassy to Japan Preserved in the British Museum," *Acta Koreana* 13, no. 1 (2010): 58-59.

[88] Hur, "A Korean Envoy Encounters Tokugawa Japan," 70, Quoted in Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 153.

opportunity to mobilise actors through interaction rituals, reasserting the authority of the shōgun.

Upon reaching Edo, the *Joseon tongsinsa* took part in formal ceremonies re-establishing the equilibrium of the relationship. Key to conveying status was access to performance in these interaction rituals and the person of the shōgun. The Joseon embassy met a welcoming party at the gates of the shōgun's residence, a courtesy not extended to daimyō and Ryukyu, consisting of the Tsushima daimyō, two other daimyō, a Ōmetsuke (High-Ranking Inspector), and two temple elders. Upon reaching the entrance hall, four Magistrates of Temples and Shrines (*jisha bugyō*) and two more Ōmetsuke met them before the three ambassadors journeyed into the castle to meet the shōgun.[89] During this ceremony, it was expected all daimyō currently residing in Edo stand ready. A motif of absence is prevalent in Japanese art and ceremony, with exclusivity a mark of status.[90] Thus, only daimyō from the fourth rank and higher participated, reasserting the shōgun's role as arbiter of Japan's status hierarchy through access to the embassy as a source of prestige.[91] Entering the audience chamber, the shōgun and his officials had arranged themselves on three dais according to rank. Bamboo screens between each dais were raised so the shōgun would only be visible to those closest. Presenting Joseon's king's letter to the shōgun was done by passing the letter between the daimyō present. Upon permission from the shōgun, the letter moved between chambers before being accepted. Messages were passed indirectly from senior councillors to the Tsushima daimyō, to their translators, before being received by the Koreans, following the same chain back.[92] This convoluted chain of interaction was precisely the point; it displayed the shōgun's authority to command such actions.[93]

Although the *Joseon tongsinsa* occurred rarely, the order-building project of both actors continued presenting these events to keep their memory alive. This was achieved through artistic depictions found in paintings or woodblock prints available commercially. Popular events at all levels of society, Hong Ujae wrote of the 1682 embassy that "A million onlookers swarmed like ants on the riverbanks; pontoon bridges spanned the water, and

[89] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 220.
[90] Anne Walthall, "Hiding the shoguns: Secrecy and the nature of political authority in Tokugawa Japan," Chap. 14 in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion*, eds. Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (London: Routledge, 2006): 342.
[91] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 184-185; Hellyer, *Defining Engagement*, 44.
[92] Walthall, "Hiding the shoguns," 342-344.
[93] Walthall, "Hiding the shoguns," 346.

countless thousands were lined up on them to watch us."[94] The popularity of this subject in art ensured its staying power in conveying Joseon as subordinate within the Tokugawa order. Hanegawa Tōei's 1748 artwork 'Chōsenjin raichō zu' centres symbols of subordination in depicting the *Joseon tongsinsa*. Here, the Joseon ambassador at the centre of the frame displays a giant flag of the *hyongmyonggi* (fire-breathing dragon) symbolising their king and linking his person to the ambassador going to bow before the shōgun.[95] Imagery associated with the *Joseon tongsinsa* was recreated throughout Japanese society through the staging of *Tōjin gyōretsu* ('foreigner parades') or the presentation of *Chōsen yama* ('Korean float') in festivals throughout Edo. Imitating their clothing, style, and routine, they proceeded before the shōgun in his palace who oversaw the performance of the 'Koreans'. Due to their rarity, these performances reiterated the shōgun's authority over Joseon to the public even in their absence.[96] Thus, the *Joseon tongsinsa* became a symbol of stability to Japanese peasants, especially during the decline of the bakufu in the nineteenth century to encroaching foreign powers. Toby argues Japanese peasants themselves, aware of this weakness, venerated the symbolism behind embassies. Indeed, the peasants of Fukuhara village provided a devotional offering of an *ema* (small wooden plaque) depicting a *tongsinsa* to the Fukuhara Hachiman Shrine in 1866. It highlighted an idealised past where the shōgun remained capable of commanding the world and establishing order.[97] By continually presenting the *Joseon tongsinsa*, the bakufu maintained these events in the popular imagination.

Performance Strategies

Taking place within the space established by the Tokugawa bakufu, performance strategies employed by Japanese and Korean participants asserted or challenged the prevailing logic of appropriateness respectively. For Tokugawa Japan, participants sought to manoeuvre the *Joseon tongsinsa* into roles conveying a status lower than formal meanings. When this proved difficult, it sought to minimise potential disruptions. Conversely, for Korean officials' part of the *Joseon tongsinsa*, performance strategies allowed for role distancing from those assigned by the Tokugawa order. It sought to preserve their self-held status against ones imposed by the interaction rituals within the boundaries of Japanese space.

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[94] Hong Ujae, *Tongsarok* in *Kaikō Sōsai* (Chōsen: Kosho Kankōkai, 1941): 30, Quoted in Toby, "Carnival of Aliens," 415-416.
[95] Toby, "Carnival of Aliens," 424.
[96] Toby, "Carnival of Aliens," 445-448.
[97] Toby, "Carnival of Aliens," 443-445.

Use of these performance strategies over the course of this relationship saw the bakufu successful in using the *Joseon tongsinsa* to assign a particular status to Joseon. Indeed, it was only possible to achieve role distancing as anything further risked a rupture in relations, upsetting the equilibrium established following Hideyoshi's invasions. I will demonstrate ongoing contestation over status in formal diplomacy by going through each performance strategy in turn.

Confrontation

Confrontation allowed Japanese participants to assert their prerogative by altering the protocol structuring the *Joseon tongsinsa*. These acts did not constitute a zero-sum engagement, but instead degrees of confrontation that did not go so far as to break their relationship. An example can be seen in the use of the Hōkōji as a venue. Constructed in 1586 by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, this Buddhist temple proved controversial as alongside being a hated figure in Joseon, it housed a tomb (Mimizuka) containing the noses of Koreans killed during his invasions.[98] The Japanese argued visits allowed Joseon to pay respects, with a confrontation only erupting during the 1719 embassy. Despite being untrue, the Koreans claimed they could not visit as no precedent existed but quickly outlined their refusal lay in the fact Hideyoshi had constructed the temple. To convince them otherwise, Japanese escorts produced a fabricated document 'proving' the temple had no link to Hideyoshi through a forged passage claiming Tokugawa Iemitsu constructed the site. Although the visit eventually occurred, a leading envoy feigned illness to avoid participation angering the Japanese.[99] Here, Japan used visits "to demonstrate Japanese military power and influence over the Koreans in a rather heavy-handed way by making the Korean officials visit the Ear Mound site."[100] Similarly, Joseon participated in ceremonies at Nikko Shrine serving as a place of worship for Tokugawa Ieyasu. The centre of a shrine network, it was situated near a mountain sacred in Tendai Buddhist traditions directly north of Edo, symbolising the Pole Star at the universe's centre.[101] Joseon reluctantly participated in these Shinto-Buddhist rituals, presenting gifts such as large bronze bell publically recognising Ieyasu's 'divine virtue' and

[98] The Mimizuka is often translated erroneously as either the 'Ear Mound' or 'Ear Tomb' despite interring the noses of Korean victims. Unsurprisingly, this site continues to remain controversial in Korea today. Hur, "Choson Korean Officials in the Land of Tokugawa Japan," 458.
[99] Hur, "Choson Korean Officials in the Land of Tokugawa Japan," 457-461; Lee, "Amicable Diplomacy?" 361-364.
[100] Lee, "Amicable Diplomacy?" 362-363.
[101] Karen M. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power: Art and Early Tokugawa Authority* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999): 73-79.

the bakufu's authority.[102] Both openly forced Joseon to perform in recognition of the Tokugawa normative agenda at odds with their own order.

Furthermore, Arai Hakuseki's protocol reforms in 1711 represented a concerted effort to assert Japanese superiority openly by altering interaction rituals. An advisor to the shōgun, these reforms reflected wider attitudes of Japanese intellectuals resenting acts of cultural superiority performed by Joseon officials. Hakuseki argued a 'tributary' should not receive such a splendid reception.[103] He notes

> [Koreans denigrated that fact that] a number of achievements in our country were accomplished by a 'barbaric chief,' Tokugawa Ieyasu and other [Tokugawa shōguns] … They are now trying to compensate for the loss of the war with their literacy excellence [through their exchanges].[104]

Furthermore, he resented portrayals of Japan that

> mentioned that our country was a tributary state [of Chosŏn Korea], and as a more outrageous fact, they continuously used [to indicate the Japanese] as *washū* (barbarians), *wado* (burglars), *wazoku* (pirates); *shū* meant for bizarre and outside group. [Their expressions on the Japanese are] Very despicable and dishonourable by using such words.[105]

This can be seen in Hakuseki's work *Kōkan hitsudan* where he lambasts Korea for being ignorant of Europe and knowing nothing of developments in Confucian thought in Qing China. He insults them by stating "the only things that the Koreans knew was that of Ming China which had collapsed long ago."[106] Protocol reforms represented an effort to confront these understandings occurring in cultural exchanges.[107] Changes included only a protocol officer visiting Joseon's residence in Edo, requiring they wait outside to receive and farewell visitors and having the chief envoy directly present the Joseon king's letter to the shōgun. While seemingly minor, these were insulting and Joseon understood the symbolism of these

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[102] Toby, "Contesting the Centre," 357-358.
[103] Nakai Chikuzan, "Sōbō kigen" in *Nihon Keizai sōsho*, vol. 16 (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Sōsho Kankōkai, 1915): 366-370, Quoted in Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 190.
[104] Arai Hakuseki, "Chōsen heishi gogi," in *Arai Hakuseki zenshū*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1976): 683-684, Quoted in Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 103-104.
[105] Hakuseki, "Chōsen heishi gogi," 683, Quoted in Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 103-104.
[106] Doyoung Park, "A New Perspective on the Korean Embassy (Chosen Tsushinshi): The View from the Intellectuals in Tokugawa Japan," 14-16.
[107] Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 187.

changes.[108] For example, Hakuseki ordered performances of ancient Korean court music to extract a confession that Korean participants did not recognise it. Such acts 'exposed' Joseon's failures and dispelled assumed knowledge it offered an exemplar of Confucian learning Japan should emulate. Likewise, gifts received by the 1711 embassy depicted "loyalty and filial piety" throughout Japanese history stressing their equality, if not superiority, to China. Three panels illustrating proper ceremonial music conveyed that the civilization of Ancient China existed in its truest form in Tokugawa Japan. To Korea, this depiction of Japanese superiority was clear.[109] Indeed, these reforms were so intolerable that their reversal was a condition before dispatching the 1719 embassy.

Accommodation

The Tokugawa order-building project accommodated Joseon through interaction rituals conveying equality between rulers even as this contradicted their subjective understandings. Ongoing tensions around competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas saw protocol designed to ensure an equilibrium to manage relations between their respective order-building projects. Therefore, Joseon asserted superiority through cultural exchanges occurring throughout their journey to Edo. Their accounts, while biased, emphasised the large number of Japanese intellectuals seeking out their scholarship. Shin Yuhan conveys such a sentiment in his travel diary *Haeyurok* detailing the 1719 embassy, noting during his journey he produced 6000 poems for petitioners.[110] While exasperated by their demands, he noted their importance in conveying Joseon's superiority.[111]

> The Japanese' enthusiasm of seeking our writings, without distinction of social rankings or positions, they respect them if they were gods or benevolent wizards, and treasure them like jewels. The Japanese even sought handshaking and writings from our carriers of the palanquin and the servants who did not know much about writings… In my perception, they do not usually experience seeing our formal

[108] James B. Lewis, "Beyond Sakoku: The Korean Envoy to Edo and the 1719 Diary of Shin Yu-han," *Korea Journal* 25, no. 11 (1985): 27.
[109] Kate Wildman Nakai, *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa World*, PhD Diss., (Harvard University Press, 1988): 332-333.
[110] Hur, "Choson Korean Officials in the Land of Tokugawa Japan," 449.
[111] Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 160-161.

> costume and accessories [such as crowns] because of [Japan's] remoteness from the central civilization, so they admire Korea.[112]

These exchanges saw Joseon ridicule Japanese scholarship, criticising Japan's leading intellectual Hayashi Nobuatsu for his clumsy writing without style attributed to Japan's recruitment of Confucian scholars from the Hayashi family rather than through civil-service exams.[113] Later, as this embassy prepared to meet the shōgun, Joseon officials delayed the encounter as they could not understand the protocol written in Japanese *kana* and presented in 'grass writing' style. After insisting on its translation and confirming its accordance with protocol used in the 1682 embassy and not Hakuseki's reforms, they proceeded.[114] Considering first-hand knowledge of Japan derived from travel diaries and gazettes produced by embassy members, accommodation allowed use of Japanese space to reinforce Joseon's understandings. This was tolerated due to the overall importance of the *Joseon tongsinsa* to the Tokugawa order and a desire to maintain the relationship.

Manipulation

In contrast with confrontation, manipulation offered a means to alter interaction rituals without risking disruption for both actors. Establishing the prevailing logic of appropriateness within their space provided an advantage in presenting the *Joseon tongsinsa* as tribute missions to the Tokugawa. Dispatched upon the ascension of a new shōgun, their visible distinctiveness demonstrated not only foreign recognition, but the appearance of 'commanding' these rare displays in spite of formal understandings of equality.[115] Japanese writings often referred to these embassies as 'tribute missions' (*raikō*, *raichō*).[116] While the Tokugawa directed practitioners receiving Korean envoys to treat them as a tributary mission of a subordinate state," it cautioned them to keep this designation from the envoys themselves. Despite its "desire to treat Korea as an inferior," it never completely abandoned

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[112] Shin Yuhan, *Haeyurok*, trans. Jae-ŏn Kang (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1974): 302-303, Quoted in Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 184.
[113] Lewis, "Beyond Sakoku," 34-37.
[114] Lewis, "Beyond Sakoku," 37-40.
[115] Japanese peasants struggled to differentiate foreigners due to limited contact with the outside world. Indeed, in 1613 an English trader named John Saris bringing a letter from King James I to Edo was harassed by local Japanese. Throwing stones at the English procession, they called them 'Koreans with false hearts.' Beyond highlighting ignorance, it demonstrates significant hostility to Koreans forcing the bakufu to implement edicts ensuring good behaviour from the populace when foreign embassies arrived. Toby, "Carnival of Aliens," 425.
[116] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 41.

parity between rulers to avoid destabilising the relationship.[117] However, it was Joseon that was more likely to engage in manipulation. For example, when called to meet the daimyō in 1719, Shin Yuhan refused as it did not align with his interpretation of Joseon court procedure. Asserting his equality to the daimyō, he argued since Tsushima received rice from Joseon's king, the daimyō held the rank of a provincial governor within their order. As formal procedure dictated those travelling on the king's orders were considered an equivalent rank to provincial governors, Shin would only meet the daimyō as an equal. Unacceptable to his Japanese minders, this attempted manipulation was resolved by the daimyō recusing himself.[118] Alongside this specific episode, the *Joseon tongsinsa* engaged in more subtle forms of manipulation. Japanese accounts of their procession into Edo note the presence of flags reading *junshi* (a tour of inspection), *seidō* (road of purification) and *ryong* (following the command) implying Japan was their tributary. The term *junshi* implied inspection of a subordinate realm while *seidō* ordered people to clean the streets as they passed.[119] Nevertheless, Joseon's acts of manipulation could not undermine the overarching logic of appropriateness established by the Tokugawa bakufu.

Avoidance

While absolute avoidance did not occur, limiting the dispatch and reception of embassies prevented loss of status conveyed by the *Joseon tongsinsa*. Avoidance was ingrained in diplomatic interactions as Joseon did not allow reciprocal Japanese embassies to their capital and restricted trade to Busan over lingering animosity from Hideyoshi's invasions.[120] Avoidance increased in prominence as the immediacy of conflict disappeared from living memory and interaction rituals lost significance and went through the motions in lieu of alternatives. Following the 1711 embassy a significant decline in the frequency of *Joseon tongsinsa* occurred.[121] Both actors prioritised subjective understandings over formal meanings. For the Tokugawa, avoidance came in the form of delaying the reception of embassies to avoid material and symbolic costs to their order. Following the ascension of Tokugawa Ienari in 1787, financial difficulties and ongoing famine saw diplomatic reforms

[117] Norihito Mizuno, "Japan and its East Asian Neighbors: Japan's Perception of China and Korea and the Making of Foreign Policy from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century," PhD Diss., (Ohio State University, 2004): 23, 66, 72-73.
[118] Lewis, "Beyond Sakoku," 28-29.
[119] Lee, "Amicable Diplomacy?" 366-368.
[120] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations*, 145-146.
[121] Lewis, "A Scroll of the 1748 Korean Embassy to Japan," 56.

become a necessity to achieve fiscal consolidation.[122] Furthermore, cultural chauvinism saw the Tokugawa avoid interaction rituals acknowledging equality. Nakai Chikuzan highlighted reforms needed to address the following grievances including Joseon not complying with its 'historical' tributary role, overwhelming Japan through literary exchanges, perceiving Japan as their subordinate, and poor writing etiquette. Emphasis was placed on associated financial burdens and formal banquets for an actor they no longer recognised as equal.[123] Proposed changes for the eventual 1811 embassy included the following. Rather than present the Korean king's letter to the shōgun, it was received instead by six representatives dispatched from Edo. The size of the embassy was reduced to no more than 350 persons. Provision of personal gifts were also eliminated. Discussions from 1805 to 1810 saw Joseon avoid dispatching an embassy, eventually relenting to a status loss as an expediency to sustain relations.[124] As both actors could never reconcile this growing divide around interaction rituals and resorted instead to avoidance, this represented the final *Joseon tongsinsa* in the early modern period.

Relations with Ryukyu

Situated between the Tokugawa and 'Chinese' order-building projects, the Ryukyu Kingdom's mutual incorporation brought the authority claims and normative agendas of both hierarchies into tension. While the *Edo Nobori* received by the shōgun remained unambiguous in their status as tributary missions, tensions arose as the Tokugawa sought to hide this from the Ming and Qing at the micro-level of diplomacy. This section proceeds as follows. First, I establish the context of their relationship which informed how Japan perceived Ryukyu. To do so, I outline Ryukyu's historical relationships with both China and Japan to contrast the Tokugawa narrative against historical events. Second, I outline the nature of interaction rituals by highlighting how *Edo Nobori* were composed, mobilised, and presented. Here, Tokugawa efforts to assign a particular identity to Ryukyu and limit their ability to deviate from interaction rituals becomes apparent. Third, I show how performance strategies prevented open acknowledgement of Ryukyu's 'dual-tributary' status. To hide their relationship, performance strategies reinforced the logic of appropriateness imposed on Ryukyu and the conduct of participants.

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[122] Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 190.
[123] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 42.
[124] McCune, "The Exchange of Envoys," 314-316.

Context

Constituting present-day Okinawa Prefecture, Ryukyu maintained autonomy prior to annexation in 1879 as an independent actor within East Asia' polycentric hierarchy. Much like the rest of East Asia, a distinct Ryukyuan identity expressed itself by incorporating shared ideological resources such as Buddhism, Confucianism, geomancy, alongside emulation of Chinese styles of governance.[125] By the fourteenth century, three polities had emerged on Ryukyu during their Three Mountains (Sanzan) period – Hokuzan, Chūzan, and Nanzan. In 1372, Chūzan accepted investiture from Ming envoys.[126] Following this, Nanzan and Hokuzan accepted in 1380 and 1383 respectively.[127] By 1429, Chūzan had unified Ryukyu, reinforcing its position through Ming recognition, although sustained contact was limited by piracy leaving the dispatch of ships delayed for years to ensure their safety.[128] Conversely, interactions with Japan did not convey a sense of hierarchy between them. Official correspondence addressing the Muromachi bakufu saw Ryukyu employ *yo no nushi* ('Master of the Era') differing from how they addressed other rulers.[129] Indeed, claims to historic suzerainty prior to invading represented wishful thinking by Japanese actors. Although not equal, Ryukyu was recognised as a foreign kingdom.[130] Therefore, Ryukyu's incorporation into the Tokugawa order represented a major shift in their historical relationship.

Satsuma's invasion of Ryukyu in 1609 incorporated the kingdom forcibly into the Tokugawa order. Previously, Satsuma had unsuccessfully sought to pressure Ryukyu to use maritime licenses it issued in order to trade in 1566 to assert their control.[131] Similarly, Hideyoshi considered Ryukyu to be a vassal and employed intimidation to extract a levy

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[125] Gregory Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999): 7.

[126] China's relationship with Ryukyu originated by chance. The Ming envoy Yang Zai was originally dispatched to Japan to ask if they would accept tributary status in the Chinese order. This was unsuccessful and he was briefly imprisoned while the remainder of his delegation was beheaded. During this time, he heard of Ryukyu and convinced the Ming court to dispatch a mission. The choice of Chūzan to establish diplomatic relations was based on the calculation it represented the strongest polity in Ryukyu. Mamoru Akamine, *The Ryukyu Kingdom: Cornerstone of East Asia*, ed. Robert Huey, trans. Lina J. Terrell (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016): 22.

[127] Akamine, *The Ryukyu Kingdom*, 28.

[128] Unryu Suganuma, *Sovereign Rights and Territorial Space in Sino-Japanese Relations: Irredentism and the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001): 55-56.

[129] Akamine, *The Ryukyu Kingdom*, 38.

[130] Akamine, *The Ryukyu Kingdom*, 38-39.

[131] Yuan, "Satsuma's Invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom," 120-121.

supporting his invasions.[132] However it was not until after the establishment of the Tokugawa bakufu that Ryukyu became a Japanese vassal. Despite being a domain, Satsuma exercised considerable autonomy within polycentric hierarchy like Tsushima in both undertaking the invasion and managing relations with Ryukyu under their suzerainty. Thus, while the bakufu received foreign recognition of their authority, Satsuma's opposition to both Hideyoshi and Tokugawa in their efforts to unify the peninsula left them materially bankrupt and socially marginalised. Controlling Ryukyu offered symbolic capital by commanding a foreign king while a trade monopoly presented a lucrative opportunity. Pressure to act built as the rival Hirado domain sent requests for Ryukyuan submission on behalf of the bakufu in 1605.[133] Using the pretext of Ryukyu's failure to meet its tributary responsibilities, Satsuma's invasion quickly captured the kingdom on behalf of the bakufu. Rather than annexation, Ryukyu's presence in the Tokugawa order maintained a separate identity under Satsuma's control as this better served the interests of Japanese actors.

The intersection of hierarchies over Ryukyu could not be formally recognised even if both Japan and China were aware. Open acknowledgement represented a more destabilising outcome, leaving segmentation the solution. Prior to Hideyoshi's invasions, Ryukyu dispatched envoys to authorities in Fujian and Zhejiang Province alerting them to Japan's aggressive overtures. Later, Chinese envoys rejected overtures from Ryukyu to expand trade during their investiture of King Shō Nei in 1606 as they feared provoking a Japanese attack. Following the 1609 invasion, Mao Fengyi was secretly sent by the Ryukyuan court to alert China. When it became clear Japan had not annexed Ryukyu and allowed their tributary relationship to continue, the Shenzong Emperor decided intervention was unnecessary.[134] Robert Sakai argues ambiguity provided China the option to ignore their relationship and the problems it presented.[135] For their part, the Tokugawa remained anxious around open acknowledgement of the situation, a feeling heightened with the establishment of the Qing. To bakufu officials, the new Manchu rulers of China were 'barbarian'. Links with the Mongolian Yuan dynasty and their attempted invasions cast a long shadow over Japanese thinking.[136] While approving Ryukyu's establishment of tributary relations with the Qing in 1655, it remained apprehensive of their adopting Qing customs such as wearing the queue

[132] Akamine, *The Ryukyu Kingdom*, 60.
[133] Yuan, "Satsuma's Invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom," 122-124.
[134] Yuan, "Satsuma's Invasion of the Ryukyu Kingdom," 126.
[135] Robert K. Sakai, "The Satsuma-Ryukyu Trade and the Tokugawa Seclusion Policy," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 23, no. 3 (1964): 392.
[136] Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern Japan*, 118-128.

and therefore losing their influence. Kumazawa Banzan's seventeenth-century essay *Daigaku wakumon* reveals this paranoia, emphasising an imminent Manchu invasion following their conquest of China. Similarly, Arai Hakuseki feared potential conflict with the Qing over Ryukyu, seeking information on their military capabilities through Ryukyu as a result.[137] These fears led both actors to manage, but never resolve, the intersection of their hierarchies in Ryukyu.

Nature of Interaction Rituals

The relationship between the Tokugawa bakufu and Ryukyu was performed through the *Edo Nobori*.[138] While presented with the trappings of a foreign kingdom, of the twenty-one embassies dispatched, interaction rituals saw them positioned in the bakuhan system as a retainer of Shimazu clan ruling Satsuma. This dichotomy between how Ryukyu sought to present itself and how the bakufu conveyed its status was not irreconcilable and indeed utilising both identities benefited the Tokugawa order-building project. Like the *Joseon tongsinsa*, embassies dispatched from Ryukyu to Edo followed similar beats, yet their differences highlight how controlling performance at the micro-level conveyed differences in status. The *Edo Nobori* occurred in three distinct phases. First, composition entailed how Ryukyu presented itself within bakufu strictures– balancing self-held identity against the status imposed in the Tokugawa order. Second, mobilisation highlights how Satsuma controlled *Edo Nobori* as it made its way to Edo. Third, the presentation of *Edo Nobori* also featured prominently in Japanese art, allowing for these events to remain in the public consciousness.

Ryukyu expressed its desired status through the *Edo Nobori* in a manner complimenting the Tokugawa order. Protocol structuring diplomacy between Ryukyu, Satsuma, and Edo was established in 1644, dividing missions between those dispatched to Satsuma, and those arriving in Edo. In contrast to the twenty-one sent to Edo, between 1613 and 1876 over 1390 missions were sent to Satsuma at an average of 5.3 per year.[139] Those sent to Edo occurred upon a new shōgun's ascension, birth of an heir, and expressing gratitude for investiture.[140] Annual missions to Kagoshima paid respects upon the ascension

[137] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 20-21.
[138] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 27.
[139] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 64.
[140] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 48-49.

of a new daimyō.[141] Travel to Edo took approximately 2000 kilometres (1243 miles), taking on average six months, with three spent in Kagoshima.[142] Preparing years in advance involved intensive training for musicians and dancers. A dress rehearsal was undertaken a month before departure to demonstrate readiness.[143] One- to two-hundred scholar-officials, musicians, and dancers served as personnel.[144] Leadership positions comprised a royal prince standing as proxy for Ryukyu's king as lead envoy and a deputy envoy consisting of an experienced official. In contrast, embassies to China did not normally require a prince and when it occurred, Ryukyu lowered their rank temporarily before participation.[145] Ryukyuan officials wore Ming-style clothing, contrasting with performances under the Qing requiring they wear their court dress. Even as late as 1832, Prince Tumigushiku wore chest badges with a pair of White Cranes denoting high rank in the long defunct Ming hierarchy. As the Tokugawa sought performances from foreigners, it allowed Ryukyu to express their desired status while aligning with the bakufu's interests.[146]

Mobilisation controlled Ryukyu's movement, allowing Satsuma to ensure the kingdom's performance in-line with its assigned status while simultaneously bolstering their own position. Satsuma sought to elevate Ryukyu's importance to the Tokugawa order. When natural disasters resulted in famine throughout Ryukyu in 1709, Satsuma challenged plans to cancel the *Edo Nobori* on economic grounds by highlighting its performance enhanced prestige and not doing so risked making the kingdom harder to control. Furthermore, it allowed continued displays of Satsuma's unique status as the only daimyō commanding a foreign king, with their status raised in the Tokugawa court in 1710 consequently.[147] Facilitating travel to the capital required controlling movement. An edict from 1787 concerning the *Edo Nobori* states on "such occasions, watch carefully for any Ryukyuans who loiter about. The regulations prohibit their mingling with other people in such places; there should be no relaxation of this."[148] In Kagoshima, the *Edo Nobori* was sequestered within the Ryukyu-kan in the manner of other retainers. Only authorised persons could enter

[141] Robert K. Sakai, "The Ryukyu (Liu-Ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma," in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968): 123.
[142] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 59.
[143] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 62-63.
[144] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 27-28.
[145] Sakai, "The Ryukyu (Liu-Ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma," 124.
[146] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 245-248.
[147] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 27-28.
[148] Sakai, "The Ryukyu (Liu-Ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma,"" 126-127.

and unofficial contact was forbidden.[149] Wearing casual Japanese-style clothing inside, on the outside formal clothing was required to ensure Ryukyu performed their assigned role.[150] Before travelling along the Tōkaidō to Edo, the Ryukyuan embassy along the Yodo River to Fushimi in vessels known as *kawa gozabune*. Incorporated as retainers of the Shimazu, the vessels used by Ryukyu were also utilised by daimyō, contrasting with the larger *kōgisen* vessels provided to Joseon. While travelling, they performed processional music and displayed symbols of royal prestige conveying their foreign status.[151] They continually rejected eliminating banquets as austerity measures on precedent and the status loss this entailed.[152] All actors involved in mobilisation sought to ensure their interests were met in the performance of the *Edo Nobori*.

Within Edo, the Ryukyuan embassy was mobilised through the interaction rituals of the bakuhan system while simultaneously conveying foreign status. Like the *Joseon tongsinsa*, the *Edo Nobori* was a public display, with records of the 1832 embassy emphasising unattended shops as people from all classes came out for a mass viewing.[153] They visited Edo castle two to three times decorated in Ming court costumes.[154] First came the "coming forth and being seen" (*shinken no gi*) ceremony wherein communications and gifts were exchanged and formal obeisance performed. Next, Ryukyuan court music (*sōgaku no gi*) was performed followed by a leave-taking rite (*jiken no gi*) wherein gifts and a response letter were received. The shōgun gave permission for departure, reinforcing their formal control over movement.[155] A larger audience of daimyō than that of the *Joseon tongsinsa* meant these interaction rituals were far less exclusive.[156] While Joseon's subordination in formal interaction rituals was ambiguous, presenting the sword of the Ryukyuan king was unmistakable submission and was accompanied by bowing nine times.[157] Ceremonies differed from those of the Chinese-style tributary system. Absence of Japanese court music in place of demonstrations by foreign envoys contrasted with the centrality of

[149] Sakai, "The Satsuma-Ryukyu Trade and the Tokugawa Seclusion Policy," 401.
[150] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 91.
[151] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 73-76.
[152] Itaya Tōru, "Kinsei Ryūkyū no tai-Satsuma kankei ni okeru geinō no yakuwari," *Minzoku geijutsu ethno-arts* 25 (2009): 112, Cited in Seifman, ""Performing "Lūchū,"" 68.
[153] Toby, "Carnival of Aliens," 416.
[154] Travis Seifman, "Views of Ryukyu: Paintings and Prints in the Hamilton Library Collection" (Paper presented at "Interpreting Parades and Processions of Edo Japan: History, Culture, and Foreign Relations" University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, February 11 2013), http://hdl.handle.net/10125/30724.
[155] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 215.
[156] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 184-185.
[157] Walthall, "Hiding the shoguns," 344.

dynastic court music in China. Like Joseon, Ryukyuans sat with samurai in the centre during receptions instead of opposite sides of the hall.[158] Nevertheless, displays of Confucian excellence allowed the *Edo Nobori* to assert independence, resulting in a minor diplomatic incident as the 1714 embassy gave a letter emulating classical Chinese styles, rather than the traditional epistolary form of *sōrōbun* marking diplomatic correspondence with Japan since the 1520s.[159]

Presentation of the *Edo Nobori* was prominent in Japanese art, circulating widely and establishing awareness of these performances and their symbolism within the Tokugawa order. Indeed, circulation was never in doubt as seen by the fact that woodblock art depicting the *Edo Nobori* of 1832 reached the city before the arrival of the embassy itself. Their popularity is revealed through their commerciality as 'rights' to depict the 1832 embassy were acquired from Satsuma. To turn a profit, 15,000 woodblock prints needed to be sold meaning artistic depictions were widely 'consumed' and not restricted to elites.[160] The popularity of artistic depictions reflected the increasing importance of the *Edo Nobori*. From 1710, the Tokugawa established a prestigious appearance for Ryukyu seen through the decision to refer to Ryukyu's ruler as 'King of Chūzan' rather than *kokushi* (governor) to provide a 'foreign' identity and 'independent sovereignty'.[161] Consequently, artistic depictions reinforced understandings of Ryukyu as 'foreign', stressing their 'sinic' attributes. A 1710 scroll captures this, depicting Ryukyuan officials in bright red clothing associated with Ming China. At the end of the scroll, an inventory of items associated with the processions including clothing, banners, and the diverse array of musical instruments emphasised their 'exoticness'.[162] Similar depictions can be found in the *Ryūkyūjin gyōretsuki* (A Record of a Ryukyuan Procession) published in 1832 and the *Ryūkyū nyūkōki ryaku* in 1850 further emphasising 'sinic' attributes of Ryukyuan dress, highlighting continuity within Tokugawa discourse.[163]

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[158] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 213-214.
[159] Thomas Nelson, "Japan in the Life of Early Ryukyu," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 32, no. 2 (2006): 370-371; Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 226
[160] Toby, "Carnival of Aliens," 418-420.
[161] Seifman, "Performing "Lūchū,"" 29-30.
[162] Unknown Artist, "Ryukyu Chūzan-Ō ryōshisha tojō gyōretsu ken" Pictorial Scroll, (1710), Sakamaki Hawley Collection (Digital Archives), University of Hawai'i Okinawa Special Collection, Manoa, Hawai'i, United States, HW743, Reference URL: http://manwe.lib.u-ryukyu.ac.jp/d-archive/viewer/en?&cd=00065490.
[163] Unknown Artist, *Ryūkyūjin gyōretsuki* (1832), Book, Sakamaki Hawley Collection (Digital Archives), University of Hawai'i Okinawa Special Collection, Manoa, Hawai'i, United States, HW 448, Reference URL: http://manwe.lib.u-ryukyu.ac.jp/d-archive/viewer?&cd=00060110; *Ryūkyū nyūkōki ryaku* (1850): Book, Sakamaki Hawley Collection (Digital Archives), University of Hawai'i Okinawa Special Collection, Manoa,

Performance Strategies

As the *Edo Nobori* were unambiguous in conveying subordination, the Tokugawa employed performance strategies to manage encounters occurring within Ryukyu. Key to its ongoing stability would be segmentation, allowing it to take on different roles. While the logic of appropriateness differed from Japan proper, the Tokugawa successfully enforced maritime controls through Ryukyu allowing them to dictate the terms on which Chinese actors operated. The difference here is that rather than force recognition of their order, performance strategies hid this relationship. Indeed, eighteenth-century scholar Hayashi Shihei acknowledged this reality, highlighting Ryukyu "subjects herself to both countries and pays tribute to both. She uses the Japanese calendar when she deals with Japan, and the Chinese calendar when she contacts China."[164] Nevertheless, this required ongoing efforts to ensure competing order-building projects did not come into conflict. The intersection of hierarchies risked the competing interests of Japan (through Satsuma), China, and Ryukyu coming into tension through potential interactions by participants at the micro-level. The presence of Japanese officials and merchants risked being discovered as investiture envoys from China remained central in legitimising the position of the Ryukyuan king. Consequently, the Tokugawa bakufu hid their relationship with Ryukyu, dictating when and where Japanese officials resided alongside seeking to ensure Ryukyuans complied with the logic of appropriateness established by the bakufu in their kingdom. The efforts undertaken by Japan at the micro-level benefited Chinese interests by allowing this situation to be overlooked. Furthermore, Ryukyu became effective in managing their liminal status by engaging in evasion to "keep their status in confusion."[165] Unable to engage in segmentation itself, Japanese management satisfied expectations and allowed Ryukyu to maintain relations with China.

Confrontation

While comparatively rare considering the risks carried in destabilising tacit arrangements, the Tokugawa bakufu undertook confrontation in establishing their relationship with Ryukyu. Following Satsuma's invasion of Ryukyu, both King Shō Nei and

Hawai'i, United States, HW460, Reference URL: http://manwe.lib.u-ryukyu.ac.jp/d-archive/viewer?&cd=00060270.

[164] Sakai, "The Ryukyu (Liu-Ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma," 112.

[165] Sakai, "The Ryukyu (Liu-Ch'iu) Islands as a Fief of Satsuma," 114.

key officials of his court were taken hostage and brought to Japan. Residing in Kagoshima Castle for two years, Shō Nei signed a surrender document formalising the narrative of Ryukyu's tributary status.[166] It states:

> The islands of Riu Kiu have from ancient times been a feudal dependency of Satsuma; and we have for ages observed the custom of sending thither, at stated times, junks bearing products of these islands, and we have always sent messages to carry our congratulations to a new Prince of Satsuma on his accession.
>
> Such has been the custom; but in the time of His Highness Toyotomi Hideyoshi, we, inhabitants of this far-off southern land had failed fully to comply with the requisitions made upon us for supplies and services; therein we remiss our duty, and were very guilty…
>
> But our merciful Prince has shown his loving kindness… gave them his leave to return to their homes; not only so, but also allowed them to govern some of their country's islands.[167]

Not only did this performance incorporate Ryukyu into, and legitimise the claims of, the Tokugawa order-building project, it acknowledged retroactive claims to suzerainty. As this subordinate status had been claimed by Japan, but never performed by these actors, it contradicted previous understandings of status and forcibly incorporated Ryukyu. As such, this performance formed the foundation on which the relationship between Ryukyu and the Tokugawa would take place. The *Edo Nobori* would not only be a confirmation of their status in the Tokugawa order, but these interaction rituals would also be performing a narrative wherein Ryukyu had always been a Japanese vassal.

Accommodation

Out of all the strategies, accommodation proved central to Tokugawa management of Ryukyu's simultaneous incorporation into rival order-building projects. Fear of Chinese intervention motivated the bakufu's accommodation of Ryukyu's pre-existing tributary relationship. Furthermore, Satsuma desired Ryukyu's ongoing tributary status as it offered an indirect trade-route with China. Control over this relationship proved essential for accommodation. Fifteen Injunctions were issued following Ryukyu's surrender to ensure

[166] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 16.
[167] George Kerr, *Okinawa: A History of an Island People* (Clarendon, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing 2000): 160-161.

trade could only occur with Satsuma's permission.[168] Trade was not as profitable as Satsuma desired due to the presence of Chinese merchants in Nagasaki and high costs associated with dispatching embassies for the Ryukyuan king's investiture. Costs of transporting a large procession and maintaining a fleet of ships to do so, a lavish reception for Chinese envoys, and sustaining a community of China specialists at Kumemura posed significant costs. Satsuma was forced to subsidise these expenses in order to accommodate Ryukyu's relationship and avoid disrupting the status quo.[169] For their part, Ryukyu upheld this accommodation by maintaining Japanese maritime controls. Illustrations of Chinese, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese ships allowed distinction between needing repatriation via Satsuma (the Chinese and Dutch) and those to be arrested and executed for trespassing (the Spanish and Portuguese).[170] A system of signal fires reported the arrival of foreign ships to the Ryukyuan court. Courier ships known as *tobifune* ('flying ships') informed the royal government in the event of a foreign shipwreck.[171] Controlling movement accommodated this intersection by minimising the possibility of unexpected participants being encountered.

Manipulation

As ongoing interaction with China in both diplomacy and trade could not be avoided, direct intervention into communications ensured Japan's relationship with Ryukyu could be 'hidden'. As Japanese actors could not always monitor their Ryukyuan counterparts, especially during encounters occurring in China, efforts at manipulation again relied on the willingness of Ryukyu to maintain this deception. The presence of Japanese persons within Ryukyu was attributed to unaffiliated actors. The *Kyūyō* (Beautiful Ryukyu) written as the official history of the kingdom between 1743 and 1745 stated contact between Ryukyu and Japan ended after the 1609 invasion.[172] The kingdom's recovery was attributed to a fabricated island called 'Tokara':

> we ceased intercourse with countries such as Korea, Japan, Malacca, and Java. Our country stood alone and was unable to meet its needs. Fortunately, there are merchants on the Japanese-held islands of Tokara. They arrive in our country, engage

[168] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 17.
[169] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 34-35.
[170] Marco Tinello, "The termination of the Ryukyuan embassies to Edo: an investigation of the bakumatsu period through the lens of a tripartite power relationship and its world," PhD Diss., (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, 2014): 145.
[171] Akamine, *The Ryukyu Kingdom*, 67-68.
[172] Gregory Smits, *Maritime Ryukyu: 1050-1650* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018): 3.

> in trade, and their coming and going has not stopped. Our country, moreover, by depending on Tokara, can meet its needs and has returned to tranquillity. Therefore, our inhabitants call Tokara "Takarashima" [Treasure Island].[173]

Even as late as 1854, guidebooks for Chinese visitors such as the *Ikokujin ni hentō no kokoroe* maintained Ryukyu had no direct relationship with Japan. As Chinese envoys read the *Kyūyō* during their visits, the fabrication of the Tokara Islands hid the presence of Satsuma by providing a plausible explanation, or at least an acceptable lie, for the presence of Japanese merchants.[174] Similarly, Ryukyuan travellers to China were issued with the *Ryokōnin kokoroe* ('Things for Travellers to Bear in Mind') advising them on how to deflect potential Chinese questions on the Satsuma-Ryukyu relationship.[175] The truth of its relationship with Japan was known to China who accepted these manipulations, becoming just as much participants as audience within Ryukyu's performance.

Avoidance

Through avoidance, Japanese agents within Ryukyu did not encounter their Chinese counterparts, ensuring Ryukyu's performed identity did not betray their presence. Efforts to assimilate Ryukyu quickly turned to establishing a logic of appropriateness maintaining a separate identity and preventing adoption of Japanese customs. In 1616, daimyō Shimazu Iehisa wrote a letter to King Shō Nei reversing demands Ryukyu emulate their customs including forbidding Japanese clothes, hairstyles, and acting 'like Japanese'.[176] As late as 1866, Satsuma instructed Ryukyu to ensure men wore long trousers and not *shitaobi* (Japanese-style loincloths) when Chinese envoys visited.[177] Complimenting these sumptuary laws, efforts to avoid encounters between Chinese and Japanese persons managed tensions on a day-to-day basis. From 1719, Satsuma forbade contact with Chinese envoys through the following protocols:

> 1. When the investiture ships are in port, should a local ship arrive in Naha, [various Ryukyuan officials] are to investigate, seize, and hide anything that might cause

[173] Tei Heitetsu, *Kyūyō*, No. 261, ed. Kyūyō kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1974), Quoted in Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 44-45.
[174] Gregory Smits, "Examining the Myth of Ryukyuan Pacifism," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 8, no. 37 (2010): 1-21.
[175] Sakai, "The Satsuma-Ryukyu Trade and Tokugawa Seclusion Policy," 392.
[176] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 18-20.
[177] Ta-tuan Ch'en, "Investiture of Liu-ch'iu Kings in the Ch'ing Period," Chap. 7 in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968): 145.

problems, such as items bearing Japanese era-name dates or Japanese names and Japanese books

2. There is to be no singing of Japanese songs and no use of the Japanese language. Should the Chinese envoys say anything to you in Japanese, act as if you do not understand.

3. Make it appear that no Japanese customs are practiced.

Guidelines instructed Satsuma officials in Ryukyu to hide in Gusukuma when Chinese envoys visited Naha. If envoys asked to see Gusukuma, a contingency plan saw the neighbouring village of Makiminato passed off as Gusukuma. For their part, China avoided the Japanese presence within Ryukyu. In 1683, investiture envoy Wang Ji visited Gōkokuji in Naha and discovered a bell with the Japanese era-name and date, Genna 2 (1616), incorrectly recording this as dating to the Tang period. During the investiture of Shō Boku in 1756, the investiture envoy Chou Huang raised this issue having read his predecessor's records, concluding but never publicly raising the inscription must be Japanese as no official relations between China and Ryukyu existed under the Tang.[178] Consequently, intersecting order-building projects were not resolved through avoidance, but rather allowed for contradictions to be kept at a distance.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the Tokugawa order-building project was most successful in establishing its own hierarchy and managing relations with its neighbours. The *sakoku* edicts established maritime controls bounding a space capable of housing the Tokugawa hierarchy. On the inside, the logic of appropriateness organised relations with Japan's neighbours in recognition of their authority claims and normative agenda. Conversely, on the outside the Tokugawa distanced themselves from rival order-building projects. As will be seen in the following cases, they were far more effective than Joseon or Đại Việt their ability to maintain interaction rituals aligning with their order in practice. Such success stood at odds with the unstable foundation on which it emerged. The Tokugawa bakufu unified Japan following over two centuries of conflict and efforts by Hideyoshi to extend this outwards and unsuccessfully force a revision of East Asia's order. Even as the Tokugawa bakufu abandoned these aspirations, use of force remained foundational as seen

[178] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 44-46.

through the colonisation of Hokkaido and the invasion of Ryukyu. Furthermore, its authority claims and the normative agenda it rested on, while drawing on East Asia's entrenched norms, denied Sinocentric conceptions by rejecting the centrality of China and employing *shinkoku* ideology as the basis for interaction rituals to the degree possible. Deviation from accepted diplomatic protocol made it difficult for consistency in maintaining relations. This was never achieved with successive dynasties in China as their respective order-building projects held contradictory understandings of their counterpart's status that could not be reconciled within interaction rituals. When actors participated in the Tokugawa order, formal understandings of status hid competing interpretations that risked coming into tension at the micro-level. Foreign participation mirrored the interaction rituals incorporating daimyō through the bakuhan system and diverged from East Asian diplomatic practice. Segmentation proved effective as the Tokugawa established within their boundaries a logic of appropriateness conveying the status of these actors through interaction rituals that occurred at a time and place of their choosing. Through this choreography, it sustained its order within polycentric hierarchy without significant compromise by keeping competing efforts distanced.

Both the success and limitations of the Tokugawa order-building project can be attributed to employing performance strategies over the course of this period. The incorporation of Joseon into the Tokugawa order-building project proved difficult and at times often contradicted the bakufu's authority claims and normative agenda. Formal equality, expressed through Joseon's *Gyorin* policy stood at odds with how both actors understood the other. Both considered the other subordinate and proactively contested the meaning of the *Joseon tongsinsa* to reflect this by employing performance strategies within Japan. Yet both desired stable relations, limiting the extent these interaction rituals could be altered. As will be seen in my penultimate chapter, as willingness to maintain interaction rituals declined, challenges to status through performance strategies became more pronounced. Conversely, interaction rituals incorporating Ryukyu were unambiguous – it was a foreign kingdom incorporated as a retainer of the Shimazu clan. Consequently, performance strategies focused on Ryukyu itself, seeking to manage the reality that it simultaneously existed within Chinese order-building projects. Again, controlling practitioner's actions at the micro-level prevented open acknowledgement of their relationship, demonstrating tensions around this reality were managed on an ongoing basis and did not result in convergence. Together, these highlight how performance strategies maintained the Tokugawa order-

building project in East Asia's polycentric hierarchy, ensuring the logic of appropriateness within Japan's space saw actors conform to their assigned status without destabilising the system overall.

Chapter Four – The Joseon Order-Building Project

In 1395 and 1399, Mengtemu (or Möngke Temür) of the Odori Jurchen received the title 'First Deputy Commander' after presenting tribute to Joseon.[1] Embroiled in recurring conflicts with Jurchen communities, investiture represented a cost-effective strategy for managing relations. Simultaneously however, Ming expansion northwards saw Mengtemu offered rewards for investment within their order as the 'Jianzhou Left Guard'. Challenging their order-building project, King Taejong (r. 1400-1418) ordered Mengtemu to refuse Ming overtures.[2] Nevertheless, conflict with rivals and promised material benefits saw Mengtemu accept Ming investiture in 1405. In response, Joseon closed their market at Gyeongwon to apply economic pressure. However, retaliatory border raids forced Joseon to reopen them. Nevertheless, conflict eventually forced the Odori Jurchen to move to Fengzhou.[3] Here, investiture expanded Joseon's territorial control and reasserted royal authority.[4] Consequently, the Ming viewed any relationship between Joseon and Jurchen groups with apprehension, forming part of the rationale for not investing King Taejo (r. 1392-1398).[5] Later correspondence with King Sejo (r. 1455-1468) in the *Ming Shi* criticises Joseon, asking "Will you dare compete with the Middle Kingdom?"[6] The Tianshun Emperor rebuked his decision to continue granting titles

> The [Joseon] court has been a tributary in the east of China, being loyal and respectful since the previous court and never making contact with foreigners without permission… Even though [the Jurchens] approached on their own, [Joseon] should refuse and admonish them to do their duty, keep their boundaries, and not create any trouble or cause of regret for the future.[7]

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[1] Kenneth R. Robinson, "From Raiders to Traders: Border Security and Border Control in Early Chosŏn Korea," *Korean Studies* 16 (1992): 97.
[2] 'Mengtemu', *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644*, eds. Zhaoying Fang and Luther Carrington Goodrich (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976): 1066.
[3] Robinson, "From Raiders to Traders," 100-101; Seonmin Kim, *Ginseng and the Borderland: Territorial Boundaries and Political Relations Between Qing China and Chosŏn Korea*, 1636-1912 (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017): 28-31.
[4] Lee Kyu Chul, "Significance of Joseon's Conquest of Moryeonwi in King Sejo's Reign and its Attitude toward the Ming," *The Journal of Korean History* 158 (2012): 121-158.
[5] Lee, "Diplomatic Ritual as a Power Resource," 326.
[6] Zhang Tingyu, *Ming shi* (Taibei: Guo feng yan jiu yuan, 1963): 3654, Quoted in Seung B. Kye, "The Posthumous Image and Role of Ming Taizu in Korean Politics," *Ming Studies* 1 (2004): 110-111.
[7] *Sejo sillok*, 16:7a (Sejo 5/4/14, 15) in *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 1968), Quoted in Kim, *Ginseng and the Borderland*, 30.

These were not isolated incidents in the Joseon-Ming relationship.[8] Here, tensions surrounding the intersection of competing orders in polycentric hierarchy can be seen.

In this chapter I demonstrate how Joseon, long understood as most aligned with successive order-building projects in China, pursued its own order in contradiction with its neighbours. IR notes how despite seeming stability, an undercurrent of tension remained. Both David Kang and Robert Kelly argue Confucianism was central to stability by providing a shared culture. Genuine admiration and emulation alongside the spread of anti-war norms accounted for the sustainability of hierarchical relations between them. In contrast, conflict with the non-Confucian Jurchen was significantly higher.[9] Later scholarship focuses on the shifting dynamics within the Joseon-Ming relationship. Feng Zhang notes that over 'Korea's' history, relations with Chinese dynasties shifted from outright resistance during the Three Kingdoms Period to a 'strategy of deference' under Goryeo. Only under the Ming can a 'strategy of identification' be identified.[10] Ji-Young Lee employs a case-by-case approach to Ming investiture, noting interaction rituals could be withheld to compel concessions which demonstrates underlying tensions.[11]

Significant room exists to expand accounts of Joseon, particularly in locating their distinct order-building project and its relationship with other East Asian actors. Exploring how Joseon's hierarchy managed relations with those of its neighbours, while not at odds with existing approaches, requires an explanation for its endurance. I interrogate two assumptions around Joseon's relationships in East Asia – its characterisation as the 'model tributary' and the impact of geography. The trope of the 'model tributary' lingers within IR, highlighting Joseon's emulation of China at the expense of locating its distinct order-building project. This concept originates with Hae-jong Chun who imagined an idealised Joseon from the Ming perspective

[8] Another example was Joseon's execution of a Maolin Jurchen leader and his son. The Ming dispatched a secret mission in 1460 seeking to determine why Joseon had executed their vassal. Joseon justified their actions by stating they had been unruly and violent during their visit to court. Nevertheless, they would not have executed them had they known of their investiture. While the Ming accepted Joseon's narrative, they reiterated Joseon had no jurisdiction over the Jurchens. Philip de Heer, "Three Embassies to Seoul: Sino-Korean Relations in the 15th Century," in *Conflict and Accommodation in Early Modern East Asia: Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher*, eds. Leonard Blussé and Harriet T. Zurndorfer (New York: E.J. Brill, 1993): 247-250.
[9] Kang, *East Asia Before the West*, 36-37; Robert E. Kelly, "A 'Confucian Long Peace' in pre-Western East Asia?" *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 3 (2011): 410-414.
[10] Zhang, *Chinese Hegemony*, 47-48.
[11] Lee, "Diplomatic Ritual as a Power Resource," 311-312.

> China only wanted Korea to remain gentle and ritualistic, not to say obedient… Korea sent tribute, received imperial patents concerning matters of adoption, marriage, and the like in the royal family and remained peaceful both at home and towards China.[12]

It represents a "comforting fiction", couching an asymmetrical relationship in the language of Neo-Confucian benevolence to mask what in practice could be significantly coercive.[13] Joseon's close alignment with the Ming proved the exception rather than the rule not only in China-Korea relations but East Asia as whole. The term 'model tributary' hides what Kenneth Robinson terms the "Korea-centric order" structuring relations with both the Jurchens and Japanese.[14] Joseon

> created networks of people, inside and outside territory directly administered by the Chosŏn court… In addition to ruling Chosŏn, the Chosŏn monarch placed himself at the center of a number of small and semi-independent polities, including Jurchen towns and small Japanese states.[15]

I draw on this understanding to demonstrate Joseon pursuing its own hierarchy in the wider East Asian system.

Furthermore, I expand on efforts to downplay the role of Joseon's geographical position in shaping its relationships in East Asia. The cliché describing Korea as 'a shrimp between two whales' (*golae ssaum-e saeu deung teojinda*) perpetuates images of a perennial victim of great power competition. This heuristic grew out of Japanese colonisation and Korea's later Cold War and projects an image of passivity in the face of forces beyond its control. This decentres Joseon as the protagonist in its own historical narrative and treats it only as a participant in the order-building projects of its neighbours. Nevertheless, Joseon's autonomy has been recovered by recent accounts in IR. Inho Choi conceives of the basis for Joseon's authority not in hierarchical investiture, but participation in an East Asian 'aretocracy'. A "competitive performance of civil virtues" provided Joseon officials with the ability to legitimise the authority of their king in light of their recognised excellence in Neo-

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[12] Hae-jong Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968): 110-111.
[13] Kirk W. Larsen, "Comforting Fictions: The Tribute System, the Westphalian Order and Sino-Korean Relations," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013): 233-257.
[14] Kenneth R. Robinson, "Organizing Japanese and Jurchens in Tribute Systems in Early Chosŏn Korea," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013):" 337-341.
[15] Adam Bohnet, *Turning toward Edification: Foreigners in Chosŏn Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2020): 14-15.

Confucianism.[16] Rather than only affirm Ming pretensions to greatness and their place as its tributary, Joseon's engagement with these interaction rituals saw it manipulate their symbolism and meaning to assert a distinct identity within the Neo-Confucian world.[17] It adds another layer by introducing a logic of appropriateness established by Joseon inside its own space that existed alongside its relationships outside. While power politics limited Joseon's order-building project over time, it was never eliminated. Rather than rendered subordinate by their geography, Joseon not only maintained autonomy in the face of great powers, but determined the basis its authority was legitimised.

As the actor 'least-likely' to diverge from Chinese understandings of hierarchical order, Joseon's distinct order-building project and its efforts to manage relations with others supports the wider theoretical argument of this project. It continues efforts to complicate the role of shared culture in maintaining order by demonstrating how actors interpret and implement this through their normative agendas. Neo-Confucianism provided the ideological basis for Joseon's worldview even as interpretation of how this operated in practice differed between Joseon and its neighbours. Indeed, James Palais argues that while Neo-Confucianism established understandings of appropriateness, it evolved distinct practices in response to differing challenges that emerged over the early modern period.[18] Alongside other rulers in East Asia, disagreement over the interpretation of Neo-Confucianism formed a significant point of contestation within Joseon's domestic politics. Factionalism saw members of the scholar-elite and throne vie for primacy based on their interpretation of a shared canon.[19] Like other East Asian actors, Joseon legitimised their authority claims on an autonomous basis. Furthermore, it reiterates the difficulties in seeing shared culture produce consensus. Joseon's efforts to assert excellence in Confucian rites centres it as a site of contestation rather than convergence.

I argue the Joseon order-building project maintained its own hierarchy despite ultimately proving the least successful to do so in early modern East Asia. Over this period,

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[16] Choi, "'Chinese' hegemony from a Korean *shi* perspective," 347-349.
[17] Sixiang Wang, *Boundless Winds of Empire: Rhetoric and Ritual in Early Chosŏn Diplomacy with Ming China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023).
[18] James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996): 3-4.
[19] John B. Duncan, *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000): 3-6; JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea," in *Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, eds. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999): 47-49.

the extent of Joseon's hierarchy declined at the expense of the consolidated Qing and Tokugawa orders. It consistently sought to organise relations with others based on their authority claims and normative agenda to the extent possible. Neo-Confucian beliefs formed the basis for their worldview. While producing alignment with the Ming, Joseon's increasing belief in their cultural superiority culminated in the idea it represented the *sojunghwa* ('Small Central Civilization'). Their interpretation understood Joseon to be the last bastion of Confucian civilization. Consequently, the *munin* system demonstrates how maritime controls used segmentation to force neighbours into recognising their authority in practice. Thus, at its peak Joseon incorporated Japanese daimyō, Jurchen communities, Ryukyu, and even Southeast Asian polities on their terms. Nevertheless, control did not extend to Chinese dynasties who dictated the interaction rituals structuring relations even within Joseon's boundaries.

This chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by providing historical context of the Joseon order-building project, highlighting how successive Korean polities synthesised ideological resources from East Asia to legitimise their order. These efforts are contrasted against the shifting international context and the limits this posed. Then, I outline how Joseon undertook the segmentation of space. Focusing on land and maritime controls, I look at how institutional control over foreign relations allowed Joseon to construct a logic of appropriateness inside its boundaries and dictate the movement of actors within. I use the example of the Jurchen to demonstrate how spatial organisation enabled Joseon to pursue alternating policies of homogenisation and heterogenisation. Next, I introduce my sub-cases looking first at how Joseon's order managed relations with China under the Ming and Qing. Then, I explore Joseon's incorporation of Japanese actors at all levels of the system, most prominently Tsushima. Finally, I outline the dispositions of actors within interaction rituals and highlight how performance strategies managed contradictions arising between rival orders.

Historical Context

Antecedents to Joseon's order-building project capture the push and pull as polities on the Korean peninsula shifted between emulating Chinese dynasties and stressing a distinctive identity. Furthermore, a higher prevalence of conflict existed prior to Joseon's emergence considering the greater number of polities in close proximity. Whereas Joseon found itself restricted in the geopolitical context it inhabited, its predecessors held far more discretion in pursuing order based on their authority claims and normative agenda. In this section, I briefly

chart this dynamic across Korean history. First, I explore the emergence of polities on the Korean peninsula, highlighting in their origin myths the simultaneous adaptation of Chinese ideology and development of distinct identities on which to legitimise their order. Second, I highlight the greater importance of Buddhism to Confucianism in the preceding Silla and Goryeo polities which offered an autonomous basis for the authority of rulers. Third, I highlight the foundation of Joseon in the aftermath of Mongolian domination and the gradual process by which Neo-Confucianism not only became its leading ideology but facilitated the process of centralisation. By highlighting these developments on the Korean peninsula, I establish how Joseon departed from earlier precedents and capture the historical contingency of their order.

For Joseon and earlier Korean polities, how they understood their identity is seen through their presentation of their mythological origin. For example, how actors understood Gojoseon's ('Old Joseon') origin provided a barometer as they emphasised either its unique political identity or origin in Chinese civilization.[20] Depictions of its legendary founder, Dangun Wanggeom show us how "various and shifting renditions reflects the cultural concerns of different historical eras."[21] First recorded in the thirteenth century *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), it emerged during Goryeo's resistance to the Mongolian invasions.[22] Born of the Lord of Heaven and a bear transformed into a woman at Mount Baekdu in 2333 BCE, his claimed reign of 1500 years emphasised the illustrious pedigree of a distinct Korean civilization. Alternative narratives highlight the role of the Chinese refugee Kija (c. Jizi or Qizi) who introduced agriculture and proper social institutions.[23] Rather than mutually exclusive, a syncretic approach conveyed Dangun providing a distinct culture and Kija bringing civilization.[24] Similarly, Korea's Three Kingdoms Period (18 BCE – 668 CE) saw polities each hold distinct origin myths.[25] The

[20] While Korean narratives record the founding of Gojoseon in 2333 BCE, Chinese sources first recognise it as a region in the *Guanzi* in the seventh century BCE. Only in 195 BCE did the *Shiji* acknowledges Gojoseon as a distinct polity.
[21] Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002): 270.
[22] Kyung Moon Hwang, *A History of Korea: An Episodic Narrative* (London: Palgrave, 2010): 2-3; Han Kyung-Koo, "The Archaeology of the Ethnically Homogenous Nation-State and Multiculturalism in Korea," *Korea Journal* 47, no. 4 (2007): 13.
[23] Gina L. Barnes, *State Formation in Korea: Historical and Archaeological Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2001): 10-11; K.J.H. Gardiner, *The Early History of Korea: The Historical Development of the Peninsula up to the Introduction of Buddhism in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1969): 3-4.
[24] Hwang, *A History of Korea*, 4.
[25] Three Kingdoms is a misnomer as smaller polities existed alongside Goguryeo (37 BCE- 668 CE), Baekje (18 BCE – 660 CE), and Silla (57 BCE – 935 CE). Polities such as Gaya, Buyeo, Dongye, and Okje existed until their

Samguk yusa outlines distinct origins for Gaya, Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla while the *Goryeosa* (History of Goryeo) does so for Tamna.[26] For later Korean polities, these distinct origins provided a basis to legitimise their authority autonomously as a distinct civilization.

While emulation of Chinese ideological, institutional, and technological resources facilitated centralisation, ongoing conflict throughout the Three Kingdoms Period further drove this process. Recent work in IR by Chin-hao Huang and David Kang emphasise emulation over bellicist arguments of state formation, noting only one 'interstate' conflict between 'Korea', 'Japan', and 'China' occurred between 400-800 CE.[27] Designated the 'Korean War of Unification (660-668)', this teleological narrative marginalises the separate understandings of identity actors on the peninsula held. Only during Silla's unification did 'Samhan' come to describe the Three Kingdoms.[28] The *Samguk Sagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms) refers to King Muyeol of Silla unifying the 'Three Han', while a memorial stone from 686 declares "Silla unified the three Han states and expanded its territory."[29] Accounts focused on emulation overlook Baekje, Goguryeo, and Silla as fully formed polities, thereby downplaying conflict in this period. Gojoseon was conquered by the Han dynasty who established the Four Han Commanderies (107 BCE – 313 CE) in its wake. An "intrusive and dominant" Han interacted with "subordinate local systems", driving centralisation as local polities engaged or resisted.[30] Goguryeo's conquest of Leland Commandery in 313 transferred its infrastructure, population, and culture directly.[31] Acknowledging the three

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eventual conquest in the sixth century. The surrounding islands of Ulleungdo (inhabited by Usanguk) and Jejudo (inhabited by the Tamna kingdom) were tributaries of Silla and Baekje annexed in the tenth (Usanguk) and fifteenth century (Tamna) respectively. Kim, *The Silla Annals of the Samguk Sagi*, 116-117; Ho Dong Kim, "The Historical Change of Ulleungdo Dokdo's Status in the Local Administrative System," *Association for Korean Public Administration History* 23 (2012): 214; Jonathan W. Best, *A History of the Early Korean Kingdom of Paekche, together with an annotated translation of the Paekche Annals of the Samguk Sagi* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006): 301-302.

[26] Ilyon, *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea*, trans. Tae-Hung Ha and Grafton K. Mintz (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972): 42-49; Michael J. Pettid, "Reshaping History: The Creation of the Myth of the Three Surnames, the Foundation Myth of the T'amna Kingdom," *Review of Korean Studies* 3, no. 1 (2000): 157-161.

[27] Huang Chin-Hao and David C. Kang, *State Formation Through Emulation: The East Asian Model* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[28] Mark E. Byington, "Editor's Introduction," in *Early Korea Volume Two: The Samhan Period in Korean History*, ed. Mark E. Byington (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009): 8-10.

[29] Kim, *The Silla Annals of the Samguk Sagi*, 261; Martin T. Bale, *The Millennial History and Culture of Silla* (Seoul: Gyeongsangbuk-do Institute of Cultural Properties, 2016): 216.

[30] Hyung Il Pai, Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000): 125-126; Pai Hyung Il, "Lelang and the 'Interaction Sphere': An Alternative Approach to Korean State Formation," *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 8, no. 1 (1989): 67-73.

[31] Kwon Ojung, "The History of the Lelang Commandery," in *The Han Commanderies in Early Korean History*, ed. Mark E. Byington (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013): 96-98; Hokyu Yeo, "The Fall

kingdoms as distinct actors rather than components of a then non-existent 'Korea' highlights that between 51 BCE and 732 CE, Silla experienced 135 conflict years with other polities.[32] While wider conflict with the Tang did not occur following unification, this was due to Balhae, a Goguryeo successor, serving as a buffer to direct interactions and shielding it from Tang ambitions to incorporate the peninsula.[33] Indeed, this was part of a wider strategy employed by rulers on the Korean peninsula who manoeuvred around the recurring conflicts between Chinese dynasties and the 'conquest dynasties' of the Khitan, Jurchen, and Mongols existing on the northeast frontier from the tenth to fourteenth centuries.[34] Emulation by Korean polities was defined just as much through conflict asserting their order claims as it was through peaceful imitation.

Buddhism formed the ideological foundation for Unified Silla and Goryeo's order-building project. Here, their authority claims and normative agenda were situated independent of China even as tributary relations occurred to stabilise relations. Here, the *Cakravartin* ('wheel-turning monarch') as an ideal of universal rulership formed the centre of their ritual apparatus.[35] Acts such as Silla positioning its first capital at the foot of the three mountains comprising the Gyeongju Basin centred the monarch by incorporating existing local deities as protectors of Buddhism.[36] Goryeo's founder Wang Geon differentiated his kingdom from China through Buddhism. Issuing his Ten Injunctions, he stated

> In the past we have always had a deep attachment for the ways of China and all our institutions have been modelled upon those of T'ang. But our country occupies a different

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of Leifang and Daifang Commanderies," in *The Han Commanderies in Early Korean History*, ed. Mark E. Byington (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013): 191-216.

[32] Kang Bong Won, "The Role of Warfare in the Formation of the State in Korea: Historical and Archaeological Approaches," PhD Diss., (University of Oregon, 1995): 329-342; Kang Bong Won, "A Test of Increasing Warfare in the Samguk Sagi Against the Archaeological Remains in Yŏngnam, South Korea," *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 3, no. 3-4 (2000): 139-197; Gina L. Barnes, "The Emergence and Expansion of Silla from an Archaeological Perspective," *Korean Studies* 28 (2004): 14-48.

[33] Tang intervention to support Silla occurred with the intent of re-establishing the Commandery System. While unsuccessful, the Tang briefly attempted to establish a Protectorate General to Pacify the East in former Goguryeo, an Unjin Commandery in Baekje, and the Gyerim Territory Area Command over Silla. That such efforts failed highlights force proved an ineffective tool in the construction of their order. Peter I. Yun, "Rethinking the Tribute System: Korean States and Northeast Asian Interstate Relations, 600-1600," PhD Diss., (University of California at Los Angeles, 1998: 34-41.

[34] Yun, "Rethinking the Tribute System: Korean States and Northeast Asian Interstate Relations, 600-1600," xii; Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 34-35.

[35] Richard D. McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma: Buddhist Cults and the Hwaŏm Synthesis in Silla Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007): 13, 16-19.

[36] McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma*, 22-24.

> geographical location and our people's character is different from that of the Chinese. Hence there is no reason to strain ourselves unreasonably to copy the Chinese way.[37]

Referring to Confucianism as the 'Chinese way', Goryeo positioned Buddhism as the native belief system.[38] While a Confucian examination system existed from 788, its scholars only formed the bureaucracy with the emergence of Joseon.[39] Thus, not only did Goryeo's ruler style himself as 'emperor' in-line with the concept of *naeje oewang* or 'emperor at home, king abroad', but held a pluralist worldview in which no contradiction existed between presenting himself as ruling an 'independent realm'. He could be the 'Son of Heaven of East of the Sea' co-equal to the Chinese emperor and participate as a 'tributary' in the Song order simultaneously. Goryeo's ruler wore the clothing of emperors, invested royal family members as 'kings', maintained their own reign names, organised five armies instead of the three customarily allowed for kings, and directly performed sacrifices to heaven.[40] Furthermore, such acts were not always hidden, with Remco Breuker noting, "The emperor's clothes in Koryŏ were not only visible to himself; at particular times they were visible to foreign states as well."[41] A clear distinction existed between investiture and the hierarchical delegation of authority on the outside and the use of Buddhism and other beliefs as an autonomous basis for legitimising ruler authority inside. In contrast to the closeness of Joseon to the Ming, both Silla and Goryeo distinguished their orders from their Chinese counterpart. While downplayed, these practices would linger in Joseon's order.

Goryeo's subordination to the Yuan demonstrates how constructing order was possible to the extent great powers tolerated this. Whereas the Ming and Qing accepted an inside/outside dynamic with Joseon, the Yuan removed Goryeo's control over spatial organisation following their conquest.[42] Seven campaigns between 1231 and 1270 forced Goryeo's submission as continued resistance threatened its ruling dynasty's survival.[43] While Yuan officials proposed annexing Goryeo in 1302, 1323, 1330, and 1343, the Korean

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[37] "The Ten Injunctions of Wang Kŏn (King T'aejo)," in *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*, edited by Peter H. Lee, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 263-266.
[38] Hwang, *A History of Korea*, 36-39.
[39] Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992): 14.
[40] Remco E. Breuker, "Koryŏ as an Independent Realm: The Emperor's Clothes?" *Korean Studies* 27 (2003): 54-55.
[41] Breuker, "Koryŏ as an Independent Realm," 67.
[42] David M. Robinson, *Empire's Twilight: Northeast Asia Under the Mongols* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 2009): 6.
[43] Remco E, Breuker,"And now, Your Highness, we'll discuss the location of your hidden rebel base: Guerillas, Rebels and Mongols in Medieval Korea," *Journal of Asian History* 46, no. 1 (2012): 59-65.

peninsula instead saw the superimposition of Yuan spatial divisions over pre-existing understandings. Establishing the Ssangseongbu Directorate-General over the northeast weakened Goryeo's authority by investing a surrendered officer with the Mongolian hereditary title of *tümen-ü noyan* to rule. In 1270, another Directorate-General was established in Tongnyeongbu and saw the Yuan rather than Goryeo appoint military officials. Furthermore, the Branch Secretariat for Eastern Campaigns mobilised Goryeo's population and resources to support their invasions of Japan.[44] Preventing segmentation allowed the Yuan to assimilate Goryeo's ruling family into Mongolian customs and practices. Goryeo incorporated 'chung' ('loyal') into their reign names to highlight their subservience.[45] Hair was plated in Mongol fashion and their felt caps, riding tunics, and throne emulated the Yuan.[46] Compulsory intermarriage accelerated changes as Goryeo's kings married Yuan princesses.[47] Incorporating Goryeo's ruling dynasty as *küregen* established the Yuan emperor as their father-in-law, with the elite's sons held hostage and incorporated into the *khesig* (Great Khan's Bodyguard). This ensured loyalty by socialising rulers into both the Yuan and Goryeo court.[48] The extent of Goryeo's incorporation remained unprecedented in Korean history until Japanese colonisation in the twentieth century and reiterates the importance of spatial organisation to the construction of order.

Joseon's emergence in 1392 following Yi Seong-gye's coup and enthronement as King Taejo began the process of solidifying Neo-Confucianism as the ideological basis for order over succeeding centuries. Rhetorically, commitment to Neo-Confucianism was unambiguous. The Joseon Dynastic Law Code identified the Zhou dynasty of Ancient China as its ideal for emulation. Implementation however was gradual as Buddhism remained the more immediate marker of legitimacy.[49] Shifting to Neo-Confucianism was slow as Yi Seong-gye's coup represented an 'aristocratic revolution' as his 'north-eastern military coalition' (including Jurchens) sought integration with the existing Goryeo elite.[50] Of Joseon's thirty-two leading clans (family groups increasingly organised on patrilineal lines in

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[44] Yun, "Rethinking the Tribute System," 139-140; Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, 46-48, 58.
[45] Hwang, *A History of Korea*, 54-55.
[46] Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, 99.
[47] George Qingzhi Zhao, *Marriages as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2008): 180-181.
[48] Robinson, *Empire's Twilight*, 8-9, 104.
[49] Don Baker, "Rhetoric, Ritual and Political Legitimacy: Justifying Yi Seong-gye's Ascension to the Throne," *Korea Journal* 53, no. 4 (2013): 141-167.
[50] Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea*, 97-99; John Duncan, "The Social Background to the Founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty: Change or Continuity?" *The Journal of Korean Studies* 6 (1988-89): 57.

this period), twenty-four served in Goryeo's bureaucracy.[51] Key to Joseon's ability to establish their authority claims and normative agenda was establishing control over spatial organisation. Reforms sought to eliminate rival ideologies within its boundaries capable of legitimising other authorities. This process was top-down, with Neo-Confucianism being adopted by elites quicker than lower levels of society where local beliefs lingered. Indeed Yi Seong-gye also drew on Buddhist and Daoist rituals when founding his new dynasty as these held greater legitimacy within the country at this time.[52] Effective control over spatial organisation allowed Joseon to establish a logic of appropriateness inside forming the basis on which their order could organise relations with foreign actors on its own terms.

Institutional Basis for the Segmentation of Space

Segmentation was critical to Joseon's efforts to maintain a distinct order-building project at odds with more powerful neighbours within East Asia's polycentric hierarchy. Externally, being situated on the Korean peninsula afforded Joseon a geographical advantage as it proved easier to distance themselves as its seacoast naturally closed off its boundaries. Thus, attention could be dedicated to controlling its singular mountainous land boundary to its north. Internally, unlike the Tokugawa bakufu or ruling dynasties in Đại Việt, Joseon's efforts to establish order did not face powerful regional actors. The gradual imposition of their Neo-Confucian normative agenda centralised their polity to a far greater extent than their East Asian counterparts. With spatial organisation unencumbered, Joseon enforced their logic of appropriateness and demands on behaviour over actors inside. These approaches focused on maintaining Joseon's order vis-à-vis their neighbours and can be seen through the following institutions. First, Joseon's maritime policies known as the *munin* system established controls over foreign encounters and established an inside/outside dynamic. Second, the imposition of a Neo-Confucian normative agenda prevented regional Korean actors engaging in spatial organisation by eliminating competing bases on which to legitimise authority. Here, the previously dominant Buddhist establishment was removed from political life. Similarly, local beliefs existing within villages and at odds with their Neo-Confucian orthodoxy were also marginalised. Finally, I demonstrate how spatial organisation provided the foundation of order building through its ability to dictate the identity of Jurchen communities inside Joseon through these controls.

[51] Duncan, "The Social Background to the Founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty," 78-79.
[52] Baker, "Rhetoric, Ritual, and Political Legitimacy," 141-167.

Maritime policies dictated how foreign interactions occurred, thereby conveying an actor's status within Joseon's order. This established the patterns of interactions structuring relations with Japanese, Ryukyuan, and Southeast Asian actors on Joseon's terms. Known as the *munin* system, it emulated the maritime restrictions outlined in the *Da Ming Lu* (Great Ming Code) in requiring travel permits known as *munin* or *noin* in Korean.[53] Joseon consequently tightened access to trade across this period to serve the needs of its order. While the 1443 Treaty of Gyehae (*Gyehae yakjo*) opened three ports for trade to Japanese actors, this was restricted to Busan alone by the 1609 Kiyu Treaty.[54] Restriction of access was a strategy designed to compel actors to align with their order or punish acts of transgression. Most prominently, this was linked to providing economic incentives to combat piracy or reduce interactions in the wake of a conflict such as Hideyoshi's invasions. The ability of the *munin* system to dictate when, where, and how interactions took place and its implications for other East Asian actors will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Put simply, it allowed Joseon to establish the status of foreign actors inside its boundaries as the interactions between them reflected their logic of appropriateness.

Within its boundaries, Joseon asserted primacy over spatial organisation by eliminating other Korean actors capable of engaging in this process to enforce its Neo-Confucian normative agenda without challenge. Historically, the rulers of the preceding Silla and Goryeo polities had not exercised absolute control as powerful regional actors, including Buddhist Temples, retained extensive landholdings.[55] This can be seen in the territorial divisions utilised by Silla following unification which aligned with the pre-existing boundaries of conquered polities ensuring pre-existing regional actors maintained their powerbases to a degree. Consequently, periods of central weakness allowed regional actors to establish their own tax and military bureaus and invest officials to hold positions in these organisations on their own authority. Thus, Joseon gradually sought to eliminate such actors. Their Neo-Confucian normative agenda reserved particular animosity towards Buddhism. Alongside philosophical arguments Buddhism failed to promote filial piety, the autonomy of its temples and landholdings was a major point of criticism.[56] Consequently Joseon targeted

[53] Kenneth R. Robinson, "The Tsushima Governor and Regulation of Japanese Access to Chosŏn in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," *Korean Studies* 20 (1996): 26-27.
[54] Lee Sanggyu, "Research Trends in the Field of Joseon *Tongsinsa* Studies," *The Review of Korean Studies* 13, no. 1 (2010): 183-184.
[55] Duncan, *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty*, 8, 30-38.
[56] Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959): 254-285.

Buddhism's political, economic, and social power. In 1404, Joseon appropriated the land and slaves of temples alongside prohibiting priests from conducting funerals. Buddhist rituals were banned in the capital and by 1406, 2000 temples had been closed. 1423 saw Buddhism's existing eleven schools consolidated as the Seon ('Meditation') and Gyo ('Doctrinal') sects. Each was limited to eighteen temples and under 2000 monks, slaves, and monastic workers. Under King Sejong (r. 1418-1450), offerings to monks and images of the Buddha alongside recitation of Buddha's name was prohibited in cities. By the sixteenth century, King Yeongsangun (r. 1495-1506) dismantled the remaining temples in the capital and abolished ecclesiastical examinations for recruiting monks.[57] As a result, Buddhism retreated from formal politics after a century.[58] While these restrictions removed Buddhism from political life, different rulers often reduced the harshness of these strictures allowing it to retain a presence in Joseon.[59] For example, the elite practice of touring mountains and recording travel diaries as a form of recreation came to be contested between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism in late Joseon. As remote sites, Buddhism and other local beliefs remained popular in these locations. Attempts to 'Confucinize' these areas took the form of asserting their meaning through critiques in travel diaries, place-name changing, and the establishment of *Seowon* (a combination of Confucian Shrines and Academies focused on preparing young men for civil service exams).[60] While never fully eliminating Buddhism from these areas, it

[57] Robert E Buswell, Jr., "Buddhism Under Confucian Domination: The Synthetic Vision of Sŏsan Hyujŏng," in *Culture and State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, eds. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999): 138-141.
[58] Buswell, "Buddhism Under Confucian Domination," 134.
[59] As examples, in 1547 the Queen Dowager Munjeong oversaw a Buddhist revival in her capacity as regent despite opposition at court. Nevertheless, her patronage occurred in a private capacity. Later during Hideyoshi's invasions, a desperate King Seonjo turned to the monk Hyujeong to rally the kingdom's Buddhists and lead monk-soldiers ('*dojeongseop*' or '*toch'ongsŏp*') against the Japanese. In return for their service, Buddhists wanted a pledge restoring their lost certifications and privileges. Significant opposition at court existed to formally recognising the Seon and Gyo sects. Yet Seonjo justified this decision based on the belief it was better to place the Buddhist establishment under direct oversight and maintain these monk-soldiers for potential conflicts in the future. Consequently, by December 1592 over 8000 monk-soldiers had been recruited. Operating autonomously, they played a significant role in hostilities. Despite these episodes, at no point was the primacy of Neo-Confucianism ever challenged. Jongmyung Kim, "Queen Munjeong's (1501-1565) Statecraft and Buddhist View in Confucian Joseon," *Korea Journal* 54, no. 2 (2014): 62-86; Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*, 107-109; Samuel Dukhae Kim, "The Korean Monk-Soldiers in the Imjin War: An Analysis of Buddhist Resistance to the Hideyoshi Invasion, 1592-1598," PhD Diss., (Columbia University, 1978): 103-113.
[60] Maya Stiller, "Beyond Singular Tradition: "Buddhist" Pilgrimage Sites in Late Chosŏn Korea," *Journal of Korean Religions* 11, no. 2 (2020): 135-172; Kyungsoon Lee, "The Confucian Transformation of Mountain Space: Travels by Late-Chosŏn Confucian Scholars and the Attempted Confucianization of Mountains," trans. Se-Woong Koo, *Journal of Korean Religions* 5, no. 2 (2014): 119-143.

served to marginalise these beliefs further and place them under the hegemony of Joseon's Neo-Confucian normative agenda by monopolising spatial organisation.

Although Joseon's control over spatial organisation established its logic of appropriateness, an inside/outside dynamic existed as local beliefs continued inside villages. While despised by Joseon's scholar-elites, their existence was tolerated as it did not challenge their normative agenda. Indeed

> a certain measure of accommodation was necessary to maintain a viable society. Elite and popular beliefs functioned within a social context, and as long as certain conditions were met, social actors felt no need to exploit the potential for conflict. The elite generally insisted on maintaining "correct" principles… But they could afford to condone or ignore heterodox beliefs and practices that did not challenge their position.[61]

Concerns over local beliefs identified their potential as alternative sites for legitimising authority and challenging Joseon's monopoly over ritual life. Regulations placed these under court supervision. Requirements included representing gods on wooden tablets and preventing the worship of wives, concubines, and daughters of gods in-line with Neo-Confucianism's patriarchal beliefs. Public health institutions registered shamans to ensure their taxation.[62] Together, regulations sought to eliminate private worship. Nevertheless mudang, female shamans claiming direct communication with gods and spirits, challenged Joseon's authority by not only worshipping unapproved deities but performing associated rituals on their own authority.[63] Local clerks forming part of Joseon's bureaucracy often worshipped unapproved deities with Magistrates assigned by the capital turning a blind eye.[64] This reality proved tolerable in light of these practices being restricted to villages and interaction rituals recognising central authority continued. As such, contradictions were hidden rather than confronted.

The ability for spatial organisation to construct the identity of foreign actors within Joseon's order is demonstrated through their incorporation of Jurchen communities. Interaction rituals compelled performances in-line with Joseon's authority claims and

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[61] Boudewijn Walraven, "Popular Religion in a Confucianized Society," in *Culture and State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, eds. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999): 161.
[62] Walraven, "Popular Religion," 171-174.
[63] Walraven, "Popular Religion," 167.
[64] Walraven, "Popular Religion," 178-179, 197-198.

normative agenda. Joseon feared their northern land and southern maritime frontiers beyond direct control as "chaotic, violent spaces, characterised by small polities and independent actors who subsisted partly through plunder."[65] Placing those beyond its boundaries under movement controls began the process of regulating this threat. Furthermore, drawing Jurchen communities into Joseon proper placed them under direct control. Both aspects of segmentation directed at the Jurchen allowed for the establishment of identities in-line with Joseon's order even as they maintained separate identities elsewhere. [66] Living throughout the peninsula including as far as Geojedo off the southeast coast, Joseon categorised Jurchen based on their location.[67] Control varied between groups south of the Tumen River inside Joseon's boundaries and those north of this who could only be incorporated through investiture.[68] Categories established included Eastern Jurchen, Jianzhou Jurchen (recognising a Ming category), and 'Wild' Jurchen among others. These were superimposed over self-held identities. Controlling movement through six garrisons (*yukchin*) forced Jurchen moving across the Tumen (often due to familial links) to acknowledge Joseon's categories and authority.[69] Not recognising Jurchen leaders as independent rulers, investiture with military posts conveyed direct incorporation into Joseon's bureaucracy.[70] Despite performing in-line with Joseon's logic of appropriateness, Jurchen communities took advantage of their circumstances. Limited knowledge of 'Wild' Jurchens allowed leaders to fake their identity or fabricate ranks in non-existent Ming guard units to trade.[71] Although unable to express self-held identities inside, Jurchen beyond the Tumen retained agency in choosing when to engage Joseon's order.

For Jurchen communities inside Joseon, segmentation eliminated the ability to curate their identity. Their presence reflected efforts by the centre to 'capture' populations to serve their socioeconomic interests which aligned with broader trends in the pre-modern world. Both homogenisation and heterogenisation were used to construct identities based on the demands of Joseon's order. Homogenisation sought to assimilate Jurchen communities to eliminate them as a threat. Assimilation prepared Jurchens for eventual corvée labour and

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[65] Bohnet, *Turning toward Edification*, 24.
[66] Bohnet, *Turning toward Edification*, 47.
[67] John B. Duncan, "Hyanghwain: Migration and Assimilation in Chosŏn Korea," *Acta Koreana* 3 (2000): 106.
[68] Robinson, "Organizing Japanese and Jurchens," 337-338.
[69] Robinson, "From Raiders to Traders," 97.
[70] Kenneth R. Robinson, "Residence and Foreign Relations in the Peninsular Northeast During the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," Chap. 1 in *The Northern Region of Korea: History, Identity, Culture*, ed. Kim Sun Joo (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010): 25-30.
[71] Robinson, "Residence and Foreign Relations," 30-31.

taxation. For example, Yi Chiran was an assimilated Jurchen who supported Yi Song-gye's coup and encouraged Jurchen to adopt Joseon's customs and take Korean wives. Nevertheless, Yi's assignment highlights assimilation could not entirely remove the mark of one's heritage.[72] In light of resistance to assimilation, Joseon turned to heterogenization to eliminate Jurchen autonomy. Joseon established the category of *hyanghwain* (submitting-foreigners) to encourage Jurchen migration. Framed as altruism towards a benighted people, it eliminated Jurchen autonomy by providing exemptions from land tax and corvée labour in return for coming under direct control. By 1637, the term *hyanghwain* also encompassed Chinese and Japanese communities accepting the foreign identity ascribed to them for economic benefits. This status was intended to be temporary and lead to the eventual assimilation of Jurchen communities which found themselves subject to being sporadically broken up to weaken self-held identities.[73] With the rise of the Qing, Korean chauvinism saw assimilation abandoned and the construction of separate identities for captured populations became an end rather than a means. Designated *hwangjoin* (imperial subjects) in 1798, it eliminated economic benefits as migration was no longer desired. Bans on interracial marriage and performance of heterodox customs outside recognised identity categories demonstrates the use of segmentation to construct Joseon's order by curating how Jurchen and other foreigners were presented.[74]

Relations with China

Relations between Joseon Korea and both the Ming and Qing dynasties ruling China highlight the challenges of pursuing order at odds with a more powerful actor. Considering asymmetries in their capabilities, Joseon was hesitant to destabilise the equilibrium of this relationship. Nevertheless, this did not mean it was unwilling to push its interpretations in-line with their authority claims and normative agenda. This section proceeds as follows. First, I establish the context of their relationship. Despite the formal meanings of interaction rituals remaining consistent, Joseon's subjective understandings shifted considerably as alignment with the Ming gave way to animosity with the Qing. Second, I outline the nature of interaction rituals constituting formal diplomacy through Joseon's embassies known as *yeonhaengsa* alongside reciprocal missions from 'Chinese' envoys through their composition,

[72] Donald N. Clark, "Chosŏn's Founding Fathers: A Study of Merit Subjects in the Early Yi Dynasty," *Korean Studies* 6 (1982): 26-28.
[73] Duncan, "Hyanghwain," 106-108.
[74] Duncan, "Hyanghwain," 110-112.

mobilisation, and presentation. Even as the Ming and Qing remained predominant in their choreography, Joseon was able to repurpose these to suit their order-building project. Third, I show how performance strategies reveal that despite the continuity of interaction rituals, Joseon's shifting disposition often stood at odds with their formal meanings. Here, performance strategies allowed for Joseon to engage in role-distancing to preserve their belief that they were the *sojunghwa*.

Context

The Joseon-Ming relationship casts an oversized shadow framing the relationship between Korean polities and successive dynasties in China. Indeed

> it was the Chosŏn-Ming relations that gave rise to a notion of the Korean state as the model tributary in the Chinese world order. Chosŏn was an exception in its adherence to the ideals of the tribute system, but the historically unique Chosŏn-Ming relations have been ahistorically taken as typical and representative of all Korea-China relations throughout history.[75]

Sadae ('serving the great') is a short-hand framing Joseon's foreign policy as recognition of Ming superiority being morally correct. A belief in *chunghwa* or shared civilization remained prominent, but not total, among practitioners in Joseon. Indeed, Jeong Dojeon who was the leading scholar-official upon the founding of Joseon and the architect of its Neo-Confucian government pushed this belief. "He did not view this arrangement in terms of China and Korea as separate countries as much as partners reviving the original glorious connections of the mythical era when a Chinese sage, Kija, purportedly brought civilization to Korea."[76] While popular narratives echo this idea of a 'model tributary', post-colonial Korean historiography increasingly explored the historically complicated Joseon-Ming relationship.[77] Here, the "overt and outwardly ingratiating displays of affection that Joseon employed to honor China may not necessarily align with its true feelings towards the country."[78] The *hua-yi* (k. *hwa-yi*) distinction between 'civilized' and 'barbarian' was a site of contestation. Rather than accept 'barbarian' status vis-à-vis the Ming, Joseon designated itself the *sojunghwa* and a civilizational equal, echoing the preceding Goryeo's understanding. This

[75] Yun, "Rethinking the Tribute System," xii.
[76] Hwang, *A History of Korea*, 63.
[77] Cha Hyewon, "Was Joseon a Model or an Exception? Reconsidering the Tributary Relations during Ming China," *Korea Journal* 51, no. 4 (2011): 34-35.
[78] Hyewon, "Was Joseon a Model or an Exception?" 54.

was exacerbated with the Qing's emergence, leading to a distinction between 'classical civilization' and whether a 'Chinese polity' met these standards.[79] Nevertheless, Joseon continued to perform the same interaction rituals recognising the Qing Emperor as Son of Heaven and seeking investiture of their rulers. Yet Joseon did not recognise Qing claims to hold the Mandate of Heaven. It maintained domestic rituals legitimising their authority and distancing themselves from participation in the Qing order.[80]

Consequently, rather than simply being participants in successive Chinese orders, Joseon pursued their own order-building project at odds with their counterparts. Indeed, their normative alignment with the Ming represented an aberration in the relationship between Korean polities and successive dynasties in China as

> Rather than Confucian internationalism, the predominant characteristic of Korean political attitudes vis-a-vis the Chinese empire, from Korea's Three Kingdom's period (313-668) [sic] through the Koryo dynasty (935-1392) [sic], was to attempt to maintain the independence and territorial integrity of the Korean people from the threat of Chinese rule or intervention.[81]

Even the amicability of relations with the Ming could only manage, but never resolve, tensions between their order-building projects. As Ji-Young Lee identifies, the Ming used their considerable material and symbolic power to disrupt Joseon's efforts to construct order. Attempts to discourage Joseon's order-building project occurred by delaying investiture to achieve concessions. As investiture stabilised relations and secured the position of Joseon's king domestically, delaying interaction rituals generated unease. For example, as King Jungjong (r. 1506-1544) came to power by deposing his predecessor, the Ming held off investiture to prevent legitimising usurpers challenging their authority over investiture. Similarly, King Injo (r. 1623-1649) only saw investiture provided after deposing his predecessor on the condition Joseon dispatch troops to support the Ming against the Manchus.[82] Where these order-building projects came into open contradiction, Joseon conceded to stabilise relations.

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[79] Lee, "Chosŏn Korea as Sojunghwa," 306.
[80] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 45-46.
[81] Hugh D. Walker, "The Yi-Ming Rapprochement: Sino-Korean Foreign Relations, 1392-1592," PhD Diss., (University of California at Los Angeles, 1971): 94.
[82] Lee, "Diplomatic Ritual as a Power Resource," 322-325.

Animosities towards the Qing exacerbated tension within Joseon's order-building project as asymmetries in capabilities forced Joseon to maintain interaction rituals recognising Qing superiority.[83] Joseon remained biased against the Manchus and held in contempt as unworthy successors to the Ming. Belief in *chunghwa* with the Ming did not continue under the Qing.[84] Joseon emphasised difference rather than similarity. Kim Seok-ju captures prevailing feelings in Joseon through his 1682 poem describing the journey of a Korean embassy through the Qing Empire

> There are three big rivers between the heaven and the earth, while a tall pavilion stands between the civilized and the barbarians.[85]

As Manchu identity formed out of Jurchen unification in 1618, memory of their historically subordinate position in Joseon's order remained. In 1619, a combined Ming, Joseon, and Yehe Jurchen force was defeated by the Manchus at the Battle of Sarhū.[86] Following invasion in 1627, Joseon resisted any accommodation and refused to recognise Manchu claims. This resulted in a second invasion in 1636 forcibly incorporating Joseon into the Qing order. In the aftermath, discussion of a 'Northern Expedition' to restore the Ming remained prominent at court. Even in the late eighteenth century, Park Ji Won's *Hoesaeng Cheon* ('Biography of Master Heo') describes the lingering sense of humiliation as never-ending discussion of a Northern Expedition failed to translate into action.[87] Thus, a dislocation existed between formal meanings of Joseon-Qing interaction rituals and the animosity within Joseon's subjective understanding.

Nature of Interaction Rituals

Differences in how Joseon perceived the Ming and Qing were reflected in the dispositions of Korean practitioners during these interaction rituals. Formal diplomacy consisted of embassies dispatched to China known as *yeonhaengsa* and the sporadic reception of 'Chinese' envoys in Joseon. Although consistently identifying Joseon as subordinate,

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[83] The Manchu ruler Nurhaci initially styled his polity as Jin from 1616 to 1636 in reference to the Jurchen Jin dynasty ruling northern China from 1115 to 1234. It was only from 1636 that the term Qing referred to a distinct Manchu polity that would directly incorporate China and other Eurasian countries within its empire.
[84] Bohnet, *Turning toward Edification*, 8.
[85] Yuanchong Wang, "Revisiting the Forgotten Border Gate: Fenghuang Gate and the Emergence of the Modern Sino-Korean Borderline, 1636-1876," in *Decoding the Sino-North Korean Borderlands*, eds. Adam Cathcart, Christopher Green, and Steven Denney (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021): 177.
[86] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 22.
[87] Haboush, "Constructing the Center," 71-72.

changes in composition altered the meanings it sought to convey. By highlighting similarities and differences in formal diplomacy with both dynasties, I demonstrate the need for performance strategies to manage relations between their order-building projects. First, I outline the composition of *yeonhaengsa* and reciprocal missions from China, juxtaposing formal meanings against subjective understandings conveyed in the paraphernalia and persons conducting the mission. Second, I identify the importance of controlling movement to mobilising embassies and choreographing their performances inside and outside segmented spaces for Joseon. Furthermore, I explore the material costs associated with staging embassies. Third, I demonstrate how Joseon presented missions in travel diaries, gazettes, and envoy poetry to legitimise their understanding of order.

Composition of embassies to successive dynasties in China highlight the increasing juxtaposition between formal meanings and subjective understandings. From 1401, Joseon sent missions three times a year for New Years, the Winter Solstice, and emperor's birthday under the Ming. Beyond formal occasions, embassies were dispatched on an ad hoc basis for events such as the emperor's death.[88] From 1392 to 1450, 391 official missions were dispatched to the Ming averaging seven each year. As relations stabilised, the number of embassies decreased due to greater trust.[89] Under the Qing, 698 official missions occurred between 1637 and 1894. Averaging 2.71 each year, these included ad hoc missions.[90] The number of embassy members differed under each dynasty, with the Qing affording greater status to Joseon. Formally, *yeonhaengsa* had thirty members including an envoy, associate envoy, secretary, three interpreters, and twenty-four guard officers. The Qing privileged Joseon by not limiting the number of attendants and servants. Whereas in 1653 personnel numbered 225, by 1829 it swelled to around 1200 as two embassies of 600 each overlapped requiring twenty large tents to accommodate them.[91] Leading envoys were selected from Joseon's royal family and used officials from the Office of Interpreters to ensure they

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[88] Seung B. Kye, "Huddling under the Imperial Umbrella: A Korean Approach to Ming China in the Early 1500s," 42; Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 15, no. 1 (2010): 90-92.

[89] Donald N. Clark, "Sino-Korean tributary relations under the Ming," Chap. 5 in *The Cambridge History of China Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, Part 2: 1368-1644*, eds. Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 280; Donald N. Clark, "Autonomy, Legitimacy, and Tributary Politics: Sino-Korean Relations in the Fall of Koryo and the Founding of the Yi," PhD Diss., (Harvard University, 1978): 8; Heer, "Three Embassies to Seoul," 256-257.

[90] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 60; Lim Jongtae, "Tributary Relations between the Chosŏn and Ch'ing Courts to 1800," Chap. 4 in *The Cambridge History of China Volume 9: The Ch'ing Dynasty to 1800, Part 2*, ed. Willard J. Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 157.

[91] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 60-62.

functioned.[92] The Ming determined appropriate dress through a shared ranking system. Known as *gwanbok*, these costumes conveyed the status of Joseon's officials through *hyungbae* ('Mandarin Squares'). The Ming emperor was the only person to wear a robe with twelve symbols as Joseon's king wore only nine. Under the Qing Joseon was permitted to continue wearing this clothing rather than adopt Manchu-style *guanfu*. This reinforced perceptions of itself as the *sojunghwa*.[93] While material styles remained mostly consistent, their symbolic meaning to Joseon shifted between dynasties.

Gifts selected as tribute reflected the normative agenda of Chinese order-building projects. Across this period gifts confirmed Joseon's foreign character and the Chinese emperor's authority in compelling these acts. The *Collected Statutes of the Ming* outlines a standard list of items consisting of gold, silver, and fifty stud horses (every three years) alongside items specific to Joseon including "woven mates of various kinds, leopard skins, sea otter skins, white silk, different types of dyed linen cloth, hemp cloth, mother-of-pearl inlaid comb boxes, white paper brushes, and ginseng."[94] These were not always innocuous as their symbolic meanings often challenged Joseon's order. For example, horses symbolised Ming claims over Jejudo. Annexed by the Yuan in 1273, the Ming understood it to be their territory as in their historiography the Yuan preceded them in the Chinese dynastic cycle.[95] Other gifts exacted a human cost. Joseon provided the Ming with women, slaves, and eunuchs.[96] Indeed, the Yongle and Xuande Emperors requested concubines and 'personal entertainment' on seven occasions which saw 114 women sent.[97] Initial tribute under the Qing exploited Joseon's material resources and demanded soldiers in their war against the Ming. In 1639, Joseon provided twenty-eight items including a hundred *liang* (a single *liang* being 37.5 grams) of gold, a thousand *liang* of silver, a thousand *pao* (bundles) of tea, and ten thousand *pao* of rice despite famine. The meaning of gifts provided under the Ming and Qing

[92] Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," 96.
[93] Jin-Goo Kim, "Korean Costume: An Historical Analysis," PhD Diss., (University of Oregon, 1977): 157; Kyunghee Pyun and Aida Yuen Wong, *Fashion, identity, and power in Modern Asia* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018): 118.
[94] Clark, "Sino-Korean tributary relations under the Ming," 280.
[95] The Ming further exercised claims over Jejudo by using the island as a prison for defeated rivals. Defeated Mongol leaders and members of the conquered Yunnan kingdom were imprisoned there. Furthermore, direct annexation by Yuan had seen an influx of Mongol persons leading to cultural affinity. Indeed, Jejudo's inhabitants revolted in 1375 against Goryeo when they had been required to provide the Ming with horses during their war against the Northern Yuan. Bohnet, *Turning toward Edification*, 27.
[96] Clark, "Sino-Korean tributary relations under the Ming," 281.
[97] Lim Sang-hun, "Early Ming Dynasty, Joseon Women's Life in the Ming Palace," *Women and History* 27 (2017): 1-21.

allowed them to dictate Joseon's identity. Consequently, tensions between achieving material security by providing gifts stood at odds with the symbolic meanings challenging ontological security.

Mobilisation provided Joseon a degree of control over the presentation of their embassies within the Ming and Qing order. Outside their boundaries, Joseon balanced expectations on their performance with their subjective understandings. Routes carrying Korean embassies through China remained consistent. While sea and land routes were used under the Ming, only overland travel occurred under the Qing. Departing from Hanseong (present-day Seoul), embassies travelled through Pyongyang and Uiju before crossing the Yalu River (k. Amrok River) into Manchuria. Major sites along this route included Zhamen, Fenghuangcheng, Lianshanguan, Liaodong, Ningyuanwei, Qiantunwei, Shanhaiguan (Shanhai Pass), Funingxian, Yongpingfu and Tongzhou before reaching Beijing.[98] Its total length was 3000 li or 1207 kilometres, taking forty to sixty days to arrive in Beijing.[99] The alternative sea route was longer, constituting 5600 li, or 2800 kilometres. Departing Hanseong, it travelled from the seaside town of Cheolsan and Gado before crossing the Yellow Sea. Landing in Shandong Province, they proceeded to Tengzhou before proceeding to Beijing.[100]

Facilitating embassies incurred material costs unevenly distributed across Joseon's society. Pyeongan Province bore most of the associated costs. Travel from Uiju on the border imposed significant demands on men and provisions. Time spent in Pyeongan increased from twenty-two days in 1656 to thirty-five in 1828. The eighteenth-century *Yangyeok silcheong* (Actual Assessment of Military Taxation) records Joseon households contributing on average 0.37 to 0.47 men for corvée or military service, whereas Pyeongan provided 1.22 men. Thus, the population supporting these embassies bore a greater cost. Conversely, Pyeongan officials secured economic benefits. The Pyeongan Provincial Governor's Office, the Provincial Military Command, and the Uiju Magistrate held authority to conduct trade by sending a fixed sum of silver with each packhorse brought by merchants accompanying embassies to purchase goods abroad. Furthermore, burdens from overseeing diplomacy and military installations on the border saw Pyeongan afforded fiscal autonomy in controlling tax revenue

[98] Kwon Naehyun, "Chosŏn-Qing Relations and the Society of P'yŏngan Province During the late Chosŏn Period," Chap. 2 in *The Northern Region of Korea: History, Identity, and Culture*, ed. Sun Joo Kim (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010): 42; Wang, Remaking the Chinse Empire, 62-63.
[99] Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," 97.
[100] Clark, "Sino-Korean tributary relations under the Ming," 282.

on assessed land.[101]. Although these could be borne by Joseon as a whole, the decisions of its rulers on how to distribute these costs reveals how these interaction rituals had ramifications beyond their performance.

Entering China, Joseon changed clothes to remove all markings of status within their own order and instead aligned with the requirements of the Ming and Qing order. Despite their recognised excellence in Neo-Confucian rites, Joseon was always portrayed existing on China's periphery. Within both orders, Joseon could not narrate its identity outside their boundaries.[102] For the Qing, control over movement served their order by requiring Joseon to acknowledge distinctions between their Manchu, Han Chinese, and Mongol territories. A system of levees known as the Willow Palisade (c. *liutiaobian*) demarcated this. Stretching from Fenghuangcheng to Shannhai Pass, it constituted a 950-kilometre old fence and a 346-kilometre fence connecting Weiyuan Village and Fateha Mountain through four gates. Joseon paid respects to the 'ancestral territory' of the Qing and the legitimacy of the Manchus as a distinct civilization.[103] From the Willow Palisade, Joseon took twenty-eight days to reach Beijing and passed through thirty-nine transfer stations. Both dynasties exercised stringent controls over movement in Beijing. Likewise, Joseon formally alerted authorities upon departure, being escorted by officials from the Ministry of War following a farewell banquet.[104] These controls allowed both to control Joseon's performance.

Reception of Ming and Qing envoys within Joseon saw the authority claims and normative agendas of both projects come into tension. Asymmetry in capabilities saw Joseon tread lightly in imposing their logic of appropriateness over interaction rituals inside. Under the Ming dynasty the frequency of missions fluctuated. Between 1392 and 1450, ninety-five envoys were received, with the majority (fifty envoys) arriving during the Yongle Emperor's reign. Conversely, from 1506 to 1567 only ten envoys arrived. Again, the decrease in frequency reflects the growing trust between both actors and the decline in needing interaction rituals to reconfirm their identities within their relationship. During King Seonjo's forty-one-year reign from 1567 to 1608, Joseon received thirty-five envoys in response to Hideyoshi's invasion. Thus, from 1392 to 1644, 186 envoys arrived at an average of under

[101] Kwon, "Chosŏn-Qing Relations," 40-41, 44-46.
[102] Marion Eggert, "A Borderline Case: Korean Travelers' Views of the Chinese Border (Eighteenth to Nineteenth Century)," in *China and Her Neighbours: Borders, Visions of the Other, Foreign Policy 10th to 19th Century*, eds. Sabine Dabringhaus and Roderich Ptak (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997): 71.
[103] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 63-64; Wang, "Revisiting the Forgotten Border Gate," 171.
[104] Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," 98-100; Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 71-75.

one per year during the Ming dynasty.[105] Conversely, the Qing dispatched 172 envoys averaging 0.67 each year from 1637 to 1894. The Qing described this reduction as a courtesy in not disturbing Joseon over minor issues. Indeed, a method known as *shunfu* ('commissioning in passing') saw Joseon's embassies pass on messages from the Qing upon returning.[106]

Composition of missions from China conveyed Joseon's status within their successive orders as both dynasties sent *cishi* ('imperial ambassadors') to maintain diplomatic relations. Initially, Ming investiture envoys consisted of low-level officials and eunuchs with poor reputations who required bribes to carry out proper rites. This changed from 1450 when the Ming incorporated their literary elite to convey respect while simultaneously displaying their greater symbolic capital.[107] For the Qing, missions to Joseon were central to their order as their excellence in Neo-Confucianism conferred legitimacy on them through interaction rituals. For example, the Manchu Ambassador Akedun's 1725 album *Fengshi tu* ('Diplomatic Paintings') covering his four journeys to Joseon depicted his participation in the relevant interaction rituals to bolster his image as an orthodox Confucian scholar.[108] This is symptomatic of the wider role played by Joseon's participation in the Qing order. Despite containing fewer than thirty envoys, the presence of soldiers and servants accompanying these missions increased over their relationship with a 1762 a mission containing 222 people. Conversely, time spent declined from 44.6 days from 1637-1656 to 28.2 from 1837-1856.[109]

Reception of envoys presented a challenge for Joseon. The Qing Ministry of Rites required Joseon to receive envoys in their territory before crossing back into the Korean peninsula. Yet arrival notices were treated as a courtesy as formally they were addressed to Qing officials in Fenghuangcheng. This meant Joseon was not always informed ahead of time despite failure to greet envoys carrying threats of punishment. Knowledge of impending visits without relevant details occurred in 1724, 1729, 1731, 1748, 1749, 1750, 1755, and 1763. Only with the Jiaqing Emperor did Joseon receive details to prepare an itinerary.[110] Departing from Uiju, five groups of Joseon officials received Qing envoys.[111] Food

[105] Clark, "Sino-Korean tributary relations under the Ming," 283.
[106] Lihong Liu, "Ethnography and Empire through an Envoy's Eye: The Manchu Official Akedun's (1685-1756) Diplomatic Journeys to Chosŏn Korea," *Journal of Early Modern History* 20 (2016): 113.
[107] Hyewon, "Was Joseon a Model or an Exception?" 43-44.
[108] Liu, "Ethnography and Empire," 111-115.
[109] Kwon, "Chosŏn-Qing Relations," 40.
[110] Wang, "Revisiting the Forgotten Border Gate," 182-184.
[111] Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," 100-102.

constituted a significant expense for Joseon. Upon arriving in Uiju a banquet with 130 categories of food was provided. Furthermore, travel stations meals contained thirty different items. To ensure Qing envoys were not insulted, the Welcoming Officer sent daily activity reports highlighting whom envoys talked to, contents of discussions, where they visited, and contents of poems produced during literary exchanges. Memories of the Qing invasion made such oversight particularly important.[112] Facilitating these interaction rituals to maintain an equilibrium required considerable work from Joseon.

Presentation of the Ming and Qing within Joseon's order was achieved through travel diaries which constructed their identities. Although personal reflections existed, formal requirements produced standardised accounts. This is seen in the *Yeonhaengnok seonjip* consisting of over thirty travel diaries.[113] Accounts contrasted Joseon's commitment to Neo-Confucian propriety against dynasties in China. Even the Ming who Joseon considered worthy of admiration were criticised. For example, in 1574 Jo Heon criticised needing to bribe officials to enter Beijing and the state of disrepair many Confucian Academies had fallen into under the Ming.[114] Accounts of the Qing positioned Joseon as *sojunghwa* vis-à-vis the Manchus as

> Korean emissaries to Beijing continuously fed the popular antipathy toward the Qing in Chosŏn by providing firsthand accounts of their dealings with the barbarous usurpers of the Ming. For these emissaries, the trip to Beijing was a journey for mourning the Ming, deprecating the Qing, and strengthening Chosŏn's identity as Little China.[115]

This is seen in 1712 when Min Jinweon records an encounter with the descendant of a Ming prince

> "In the present situation of the world, do you have any hope for a restoration?" "Dare I hope!" he said, as he stood up with tears falling from his eyes… He then went to say "I saw the clothing that you, sir, were wearing, and I could not suppress my respect and admiration. My clothing hardly differs what an ox or a horse would wear!"[116]

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[112] Wang, "Revisiting the Forgotten Border Gate," 184-185.
[113] Gari Ledyard, "Korean Travelers in China over Four Hundred Years, 1488-1887," *Occasional Papers on Korea* 2 (1974): 6.
[114] Lee, "Chosŏn Korea as Sojunghwa," 313.
[115] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 89.
[116] *Yŏnhaengnok sŏnjip* (Seoul: Sŏnggyun'gwan Taehakkyo Taedong Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 1960-1962): 342ab-ba, Translated in Ledyard, "Korean Travelers," 27.

Furthermore, in 1780 Park Ji Won records Joseon's Ming-appropriate costumes presenting "a beacon of hope to oppressed Chinese, an island of continuity and civilization in a barbarian world."[117] Accounts sometimes presented viewpoints at odds with official narratives. In his travels Park records Qing border towns showing no "indication of inferior rural style". Nevertheless, when discussing this his servant responded, "China is barbarian, so I do not want to be born in China."[118] As direct contact was rare for even the scholar-elite, travel diaries represented the main point of reference to understand them. Forming the only point of contact for many practitioners with the Ming and Qing, it reinforced their identity within Joseon's order.

Performance Strategies

Performance strategies allowed Joseon to engage in role-distancing as they took part in interaction rituals their dynastical counterparts dominated. Indeed, Joseon had little capability to alter formal protocol structuring interaction rituals without causing a rupture. Therefore, as both the Ming and Qing remained satisfied with the formal meanings of these interaction rituals, they used performance strategies in this relationship to minimise the ability for Joseon to convey their subjective understandings through potential alterations. Furthermore, these performance strategies complimented the process of segmentation as Joseon employed these to maintain a distinct space in which it could conduct its own rituals confirming their understanding of order.

Confrontation

Confrontation saw both the Ming and Qing push their authority claims and normative agenda at the expense of Joseon's order as destabilisation presented a considerably smaller threat to their position.[119] This strategy was more prominent at the start of Joseon's relationship with each dynasty and declined in use as relations improved. As discussed earlier, the Ming initially engaged in derogatory actions during interaction rituals. Ming officials reportedly flogged Joseon officials until their demands were met in some cases.[120] Alongside confirming subordination, these constituted diplomatic insults. It reinforces how a

[117] Ledyard, "Korean Travelers," 26.
[118] Pak Ji-won, *Yeolha ilgi* [The Rehe Diary] (Taipei: Taiwan shudian, 1956): I, 10b, Quoted in Wang, "Revisiting the Forgotten Border Gate," 179.
[119] Kye, "Posthumous Image," 109-110.
[120] Wang, *Harmony and War*, 174.

power imbalance allowed dynasties in China to be more aggressive during interaction rituals. Despite an improving relationship, the Ming employed confrontation when unforeseen problems arose. In 1450 Ming envoys demanded an audience with King Munjong (r. 1450-1452) despite his serious illness. They rejected compromises and prioritised performing interaction rituals in-line with protocol to ensure status recognition. Consequently, Joseon acquiesced and allowed their edict to be presented and held a private meeting with the heir also suffering from this illness.[121] Later in 1626, Ming envoy Jiang Yueguang requested King Injo (r. 1623-1649) change out of mourning clothes following the death of a royal family member. Jiang emphasised formal clothing was required when receiving an imperial edict, threatening withdrawal of investiture if Joseon did not comply.[122] While minor, they are demonstrative of an unwillingness to allow Joseon to deviate from expected performances.

The Qing employed confrontation at the start of their relationship with Joseon. Use of force allowed the Qing to establish interaction rituals against Joseon's interests. Following Joseon's defeat, acknowledgement of Hongtaiji as "the emperor of lenience, kindheartedness, beneficence, and brilliance of the country of the Great Qing" was not enough. Personal surrender was required to end hostilities. A massive alter at Samjeondo on the Hangang River was constructed to receive Injo's surrender. It required Injo to kneel three times and then bow his head three times before Hongtaiji. Then, Injo surrendered the Ming seal and book of imperial investiture.[123] Although this interaction ritual was common in East Asia, rarely did both rulers directly participate as intermediaries sought investiture on their behalf. This increased Joseon's sense of humiliation. Ongoing interaction rituals at the Samjeondo Monument reproduced this event. Recorded in Chinese, Korean, and Manchu, it celebrated Joseon's conquest and represented a nominally voluntary display of Qing greatness. Until 1723, participants re-enacted Injo's kowtow three times. Such an act further undermined the ability of Joseon to maintain a distinct space, with the site serving as a constant reminder of Qing intrusion. However, in 1731 Qing envoys only requested inscriptions of the stele at Samjeondo. By 1762, even these requests ceased. In the late nineteenth-century Qing envoys were only vaguely aware of its existence and uncertain if it featured Manchurian script.[124] As relations stabilised, the necessity of confrontation as a performance strategy declined.

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[121] Heer, "Three Embassies to Seoul," 243-247.
[122] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 41-42.
[123] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 37-41.
[124] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 75.

Accommodation

Accommodation between order-building projects represented a desire to maintain an equilibrium. This did not resolve differences, but instead sought to minimise the resulting tensions. As their relationship improved, interaction rituals with the Ming proved easier due to greater alignment. Anxieties over expectations when performing in China created stress for early Korean embassies. Fortunately, Korean eunuchs serving the Ming helped facilitate interactions by helping Joseon officials navigate court politics.[125] Furthermore, they ensured performances occurred in-line with Ming expectations. Conversely, Joseon employed accommodation to endure humiliations associated with Ming chauvinism. The *Narratives of Yellosil* record an incident in the sixteenth-century wherein a Ming envoy pressured Seonjo to drink. To avoid this, Seonjo ordered his servants pour honey and water over alcohol. Growing suspicious, the envoy suggested switching cups. To hide this ruse, a servant deliberately spilt the cup on the envoy. Feigning anger for disgracing a guest and threatening punishment, the envoy protested leading drinking to end.[126] Put simply, this action is symptomatic of Joseon's willingness to turn the other cheek in the face of such humiliations. Whether ensuring correct performance in the Ming order or avoiding problems involving arrogant officials, acts of accommodation served this relationship well.

Relations with the Qing saw Joseon far less willing to engage in accommodation. This was ironic as despite Joseon holding the Ming in higher regard, it was the Qing who put far greater effort into accommodating them within their order. Manchu overtures afforded considerable respect to Joseon's status. In 1619, the Manchus dispatched a sovereign letter (c. *guoshu*, k. *gukseo*) between equals asking Joseon to make common cause against the Ming. Joseon rejected this overture as apart from closeness to the Ming, it departed from formal diplomatic correspondence by using Mongolian rather than Chinese. Their response was downgraded to the provincial level by affixing the seal of the Governor of Pyeongan rather than the king.[127] As such, Joseon rejected accommodation, a situation exacerbated by the

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[125] David M. Robinson, "Korean Lobbying at the Ming Court: King Chungjong's Usurpation of 1506: A Research Note," *Ming Studies* 1 (1999): 37-41.

[126] Shin Myung-ho, *Joseon Royal Court Culture: Ceremonial and Daily Life*, trans. Timothy V. Atkinson (Paju-si, Gyeonggi-do: Dolbegae, 2004): 30.

[127] Joseon used 'colourful terms' such as 'old chieftain' (k. *roju*), 'barbarian chieftain' (k. *iju*), 'chieftain of slaves' (k. *noju*), or 'chieftain of thieves' (k. *jeokju*) to describe Nurhaci within domestic correspondence, highlighting the contempt felt towards the emerging Qing order. Ironically, unfamiliarity with Mongolian characters saw Joseon address Nurhaci as 'grandfather' in their response. Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 23.

deposing of King Gwnaghae (r. 1608-1623) in 1623 by Ming loyalists.[128] As the relationship improved, the Qing altered interaction rituals to better accommodate Joseon and offset difficulties associated with performance. For example, exemptions from providing tribute were occasionally extended by the reign of the Kangxi Emperor.[129] Furthermore, the Qing afforded the privilege of travelling without escort which even the Ming had not bestowed on Joseon and was not extended to others.[130] Joseon was allowed an unlimited stay in Beijing in contrast to the forty-day limit imposed by the Ming.[131] This reflects the previously mentioned elimination on the number of attendants Joseon's embassies could bring. Such acts of accommodation conveyed the high status of Joseon in the Qing order.

Manipulation

Manipulation exploited interaction rituals structuring relations to secure subjective understandings beyond the formal meanings of protocol. The Qing engaged in deceit to alter Joseon's relationship to their order. Missions to Joseon consisted of Manchu rather than Han Chinese officials. This carried significant connotations. While Han Chinese officials visited 'peacefully' incorporated polities, Manchus visited 'conquered' territories. From 1645, Joseon received calendars listing it as an inner province alongside Shanxi and Shandong. The Kangxi Atlas depicted Joseon as part of their empire.[132] Furthermore, the 1719 'Map With a Complete View of Imperial Territories' labelled Chinese territories using Chinese script and areas of Manchuria which included Joseon using the Manchu alphabet.[133] Manipulating Joseon served "to demonstrate, maintain, and consolidate its legitimacy as the human and institutional agent of the Mandate of Heaven and strengthen its claim to civilized centrality and Chineseness through the hierarchical relationship."[134] Beyond the symbolism of their performance, non-state participants also manipulated interaction rituals to their benefit. A cartel of Chinese merchants monopolised transportation of Joseon embassy's cargo. They delayed the departure of embassies by several months to force officials to purchase their supplies and prevented trade their approval to increase profits. Only when 247 Korean

[128] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 23-25.
[129] Lim, "Tributary Relations between the Chosŏn and Ch'ing Courts to 1800," 159-160.
[130] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 64-65.
[131] Kwon, "Chosŏn-Qing Relations," 40.
[132] Annam and Ryukyu received similar treatment in 1789 and 1810 respectively. Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 13.
[133] Ku Pŏmjin, "Chŏng ŭi Chosŏn sahaeng insŏn kwa Tae Chŏng cheguk ch'eje," *Inmun nonch'ong* 59 (2008): 1-50, Cited in Kim, *Ginseng and the Borderland*, 8-12.
[134] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 61-62.

debtors could not payback sixty thousand *liang* of silver in 1723 did manipulation end. King Gyeongjong (r. 1720-1724) raised this issue with the Yongzheng Emperor who abolished the cartel.[135] Both demonstrate manipulation eliminating Joseon's autonomy in these interaction rituals.

Inability to alter interaction rituals with the Ming and Qing did not prevent Joseon manipulating Chinese identity. Segmentation allowed Joseon to demand performances from Chinese inhabitants in their space confirming their normative agenda through separate interaction rituals. Eliminating the choice of Chinese inhabitants forced them to perform roles at odds with both their self-held identity and Chinese order-building projects. Following the rise of the Qing, Joseon converted Chinese subjects into 'Ming' descendants to participate in domestic rituals. They descended from Ming deserters after Hideyoshi's invasion or the roughly 100,000 Chinese refugees fleeing Liaodong after the Qing conquest and proved central in rituals venerating Ming emperors.[136] Joseon fabricated groups to achieve this. Both the Cheon and Ban descent groups maintained fabricated biographies claiming descent from Ming loyalists. Likewise, the Sanggok Ma descent group was 'identified' by Joseon as descended from the Ming General Ma Gui who fought Hideyoshi.[137] Reliant on Joseon for their survival, these groups had little choice but to conform. Manipulation of these groups allowed Joseon to better position itself as the Ming's successor within their domestic rituals.

Avoidance

Avoidance allowed Joseon to establish distinct interaction rituals legitimising their order. Unable to remove Joseon from interaction rituals at odds with their understanding, segmentation allowed Joseon to hide contradictory performances from Chinese dynasties inside. This maintained stable relations with the Ming and Qing and allowed Joseon to legitimise their authority through their own normative agenda also. For example, Joseon maintained shrines recognising native dynasties and their legendary founders. Shrines were established for the founder of Goryeo, Silla, Baekje, and Goguryeo, alongside legendary figures such as Dangun and Kija which asserted an independent basis for royal authority.[138]

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[135] The cartel leader was punished with 100 lashes and wearing a cangue (similar to a pillory) for three months. In return, Joseon beheaded the debtors in 1728. Kim, *Ginseng and the Borderland*, 116-121.
[136] Duncan, "Hyanghwain," 110-112; Adam Bohnet, "From Liaodongese Refugee to Ming Loyalist: The Historiography of the Sanggok Ma, a Ming Migrant Descent Group in Late Joseon Korea," *The Review of Korean Studies* 15, no. 1 (2012): 112-113.
[137] Bohnet, "From Liaodongese Refugee to Ming Loyalist," 122-126.
[138] Haboush, *A Heritage of Kings*, 47-48.

Furthermore, time was recorded on Joseon's standards inside at odds with the prerogative of Chinese emperors. Upon the death of Joseon's rulers, they received a temple name that was used to mark the passage of time despite expectations the Ming or Qing calendar would be used following investiture. This prevented Joseon being "colonized by sinicized time."[139] Finally, Joseon maintained shrines to Ming emperors after their collapse. In 1704, Mandongmyo Shrine was established for the Wanli and Chongzhen Emperors. The Taebodan (Altar of Gratitude) honoured the Ming through sacrifices. In 1727, use of the personal names of deceased Ming emperors was forbidden. Joseon justified maintain these interaction rituals as no known descendants existed to perform these rites.[140] As this contradicted their relationship with the Qing, avoidance allowed Joseon to hide these interaction rituals. Control over the movement of persons into and out of the Korean peninsula ensured such performances would not come to light.

Imposition of interaction rituals inside their boundaries saw Joseon attempt to avoid performances challenging their order-building project to the extent possible. Despite difficulties, Joseon sought to maintain their understandings of ritual propriety in the face of power asymmetries. This is best conveyed during Hideyoshi's invasions. Although Ming intervention ensured Joseon's survival and engendered gratitude from Joseon's court, disagreement around ritual propriety continued. Tension emerged as Ming soldiers experienced visions of Guan Yu striking down the Japanese.[141] As his worship was unknown to Joseon, it conveyed an image of the Ming "as unreasonable, irrational, and even culturally alien, if not barbarous." Thus, Ming requests Joseon construct a temple at their capital's South Gate were poorly received. Compounding this was the expectation King Seonjo would participate in the opening rituals upon completion in 1598. Their similarity with Buddhist rites did nothing to endear Joseon to their performance, with Seonjo shocked at the thought of "shaved heads" (monks) participating in Ming rituals. While Seonjo made offerings, the performance of Ming clowns in these rites was considered an affront to royal dignity. The *Seonjo sillok* records a Joseon official beseeching the king to tell his Ming hosts, "This farce

[139] JaHyun Kim Haboush, "Contesting Chinese Time, Nationalizing Temporal Space: Temporal Inscription in Late Chosŏn Korea," Chap. 3 in *Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition*, ed. Lynn A. Struve (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005): 130.
[140] Haboush, "Contesting Chinese Time," 123-126; Haboush, *A Heritage of Kings*, 39.
[141] Guan Yu was a Chinese general who served the polity of Shu Han during China's Three Kingdom period (220-280) and became a figure of note in this conflict. Deified as early as the Sui dynasty (581-618), Guan Yu is worshipped as a guardian deity in Chinese folk religion, as a bodhisattva in Buddhism, and held in high esteem in Confucianism.

deeply wounds both the high and low of our small land!"[142] Following this performance, Seonjo avoided future participation despite persistent requests from Ming officials. Furthermore, he supported policies marginalising the temple.[143] Requests for constructing another temple at the Eastern Gate witnessed foot dragging and stonewalling on Joseon's part as they delayed construction until 1602.[144] Although unable to entirely avoid the imposition of the Guan Yu cult, Joseon's willingness to go to such lengths despite Ming entreaties highlights their desire to maintain a distinct order-building project.

Relations with Tsushima

Simultaneously incorporated within the Joseon and Tokugawa order-building project, Tsushima's position is symptomatic of wider tensions as Joseon sought to incorporate regional Japanese actors. Whereas ruler-to-ruler diplomacy favoured the Tokugawa as interaction rituals occurred within Japan, the Joseon order-building project incorporated Tsushima within their order on their terms through maritime controls. This section proceeds as follows. First, I establish the context of Joseon's relationship with Tsushima as part of wider efforts to incorporate daimyō throughout Japanese history. The weakness of the Ashikaga bakufu allowed Joseon's order to reach its greatest extent before declining following Tokugawa consolidation. Second, I outline the nature of interaction rituals and how various missions between them were composed, mobilised, and presented. While the incorporation of Tsushima and other actors posed a challenge, this intersection also offered a pragmatic solution for the shōgun who was not at risk of losing his status by letting regional actors conduct day-to-day relations within Joseon. Third, I show how performance strategies ensured Tsushima performed in-line with the interaction rituals established by Joseon. Nevertheless, while Tsushima could not escape the formal meanings of these interaction rituals, performance strategies offered a means to pursue their interests at the intersection of these orders.

[142] Joshua Van Lieu, "A Farce that Wounds Both High and Low: The Guan Yu Cult in Chosŏn-Ming Relations," *Journal of Korean Religions* 5, no. 2 (2014): 40-41.
[143] Van Lieu, "A Farce that Wounds Both High and Low," 54-56.
[144] Van Lieu, "A Farce that Wounds Both High and Low," 56-63.

Context

As discussed in the previous chapter, Joseon's court and the Tokugawa bakufu recognised their formal equality even as subjective understandings expressed belief in their superiority. However, as *Joseon tongsinsa* occurred in Japanese space, performances more often recognised the authority claims and normative agenda of the Tokugawa order. Nevertheless, *Joseon tongsinsa* did not constitute the entirety of relations in the early modern period. Joseon incorporated Japanese regional elites into their order at odds with both the Ashikaga and Tokugawa bakufu. Indeed, the collapse of central authority in Japan before 1600 allowed Joseon to hold the upper hand.[145] Instability in the Ashikaga bakufu and Sengoku period saw Joseon directly incorporate regional actors whereas a more considered approach was needed vis-à-vis the more cohesive Tokugawa. Tsushima best demonstrates the intersection of Joseon's order with their Japanese counterparts. Located in the Eastern Channel between the Japanese archipelago and Korean peninsula, it participated simultaneously in both orders. Governed by the Sō clan from the thirteenth to nineteenth centuries, it conducted day-to-day diplomacy with Joseon on the shōgun's behalf while also recognising the authority of Joseon's king. While state-centric histories present Tsushima as "loyal samurai diplomats", this hides their status as 'international' actors participating in non-Japanese political orders.[146] Indeed, the Sō conceived themselves as separate, referring to Japan as *naichi* (mainland) even following the Meiji Restoration.[147]

Although Tsushima maintained authority relationships with successive Japanese polities, it exercised considerable autonomy 'internationally' considering its distance from the political centre. The third-century *Records of the Three Kingdoms* first potentially references Tsushima as a distinct country called *Dui hai guo* reliant on fishing and lacking agricultural land.[148] Under Japan's Ritsuryō system, Tsushima was formally governed from the eighth to twelfth-century under the Dazaifu which governed Kyushu.[149] Here, realities on

[145] Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 54-56.
[146] Tomomi J. Emoto, "Border historicity and ethnographic rupture: Pirates, Korean Kings and borderlanders in transnational Tsushima Island, Japan," *History and Anthropology* 29, no. 4 (2018): 427; Tomomi J. Emoto, "Performing Alterity: Postcolonial Genesis of Borderland Identity in Japan," *Journal of Folklore Research* 53, no. 1 (2016): 3.
[147] Emoto, "Border historicity and ethnographic rupture," 433.
[148] Barbara Seyock, "Pirates and traders on Tsushima Island during the late 14th to the early 16th century: as seen from historical and archaeological perspectives," in *Trade and Transfer Across the East Asian "Mediterranean"*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005): 92-93.
[149] Seyock, "Pirates and traders on Tsushima Island," 93.

the ground often contradicted formal arrangements delegating authority. While the Kamakura bakufu appointed the Shōni clan to rule, in practice their Sō retainers were Tsushima's rulers.[150] Even then, Tsushima's use by pirates from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries challenged Sō control. Only from the sixteenth-century were the Sō formally recognised as ruling Tsushima, with Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu doing so in 1587 and 1603 respectively.[151] As long as the needs of the Tokugawa order-building project were met, Tsushima could operate with discretion internationally.

Tsushima simultaneously participated in Joseon's order. For Joseon, Tsushima was a Korean territory called 'Taemado' inhabited by Japanese. Incorporation into both orders meant "Tsushima functioned as a shock absorber between the two governments and acted as a crucial device to create accord between the two different cultures at the same time."[152] Initially, Korean sources recognised Tsushima as Japanese. The *Samguk sagi* records Tsushima as a Japanese island in the fifth-century, with Silla not responding to Japan's occupation in 408 CE but raising concerns of potential attack.[153] Following Joseon's establishment, Tsushima's ruler Sō Sadashige informed Taejo of his succession in-line with norms leadership changes be reported to superiors.[154] The Sō used their relationship with Joseon to legitimise their status as Tsushima's rulers in contradiction with their formal status as Shōni clan retainers under the Ashikaga bakufu.[155] In 1438, Joseon awarded the Sō exclusive rights to issue travel and fishing permits in Tsushima culminating in a 1445 treaty known as *Gyehae yakjo*.[156] By giving the right to send fifty ships each year to designated ports and stipends for actively combatting piracy, Joseon established maritime control.[157] Furthermore, Joseon provided rice to Tsushima in the same manner as rice distributed to

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[150] Kawazoe Shōji and G. Cameron Hurst III, "Japan and East Asia," Chap. 9 in *The Cambridge History of Japan Volume 3: Medieval Japan*, ed. Kozo Yamamura (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 403; Jurgis Elisonas, "The inseparable trinity: Japan's relations with China and Korea," Chap. 6 in *The Cambridge History of Japan Volume 4: Early Modern Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 239.

[151] Asao Naohiro and Bernard Susser, "The sixteenth-century unification," Chap. 2 in *The Cambridge History of Japan Volume 4: Early Modern Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 68; Elisonas, "The inseparable trinity," 294.

[152] Lee, "Cultural Expressions of Tokugawa Japan and Chosŏn Korea," 143.

[153] Kim, *The Silla Annals of the Samguk Sagi*, 93.

[154] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations*, 57.

[155] Isaac C.K. Tan, "Beyond Frontiers and Borderlands: A Reexamination of Tsushima's/Taema Do's Geopolitical Position in Fifteenth Century East Asia," International Journal of Korean History 26, no. 1 (2021): 81-82.

[156] Lee, "Research Trends in the Field of Joseon Tongsinsa Studies," 183.

[157] Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*, 47.

other provinces.[158] Consequently, the Sō became Joseon's vassal.[159] Relations with Tsushima are symptomatic of Joseon's wider engagement with Japanese regional actors. Iki Island maintained independent relations with Joseon until 1472.[160] From 1367, Joseon incorporated clans such as the Imagawa, Shōni, Shibukawa, Ōuchi and Munakata alongside officials and merchants throughout Kyushu and Western Honshu, permitting trade in return for combatting piracy which the Ashikaga proved unable to do so.[161] While intersection generated tension, it also provided benefits to actors involved.

While conflict over Tsushima did not bring Joseon and the Ashikaga bakufu to blows, these conflicts still generated tension. Historically, Tsushima had been attacked during wider conflicts between Japanese polities and their East Asian neighbours. In 1019 it was invaded by Jurchens as part of the wider Toi invasion striking Kyushu.[162] Later in 1274 and 1281 it had been the site of Mongol invasions as the Yuan sought to conquer Japan. For Joseon, conflict was driven by Tsushima's use by pirates resulting in Joseon invading in 1389 and 1419. Hostilities had been directed against the Sōda clan actively engaging in piracy. The 1419 invasion saw Sejong dispatch 227 ships carrying 17,285 soldiers resulting in the destruction of 129 pirate ships, 1939 'pirate houses', and the execution of 114 captured pirates.[163] This did not escalate into wider conflict due to the performance strategies managing the intersection of their hierarchies.

Nature of Interaction Rituals

Interaction rituals structuring relations between Joseon and Tsushima recognised the authority claims and normative agenda of Joseon's order-building project. Joseon established maritime controls, thereby dictating the status of Tsushima and other Japanese actors. Not only did Tsushima perform their submission within the Waegwan ('Japanese House') in Busan, but the reception of Korean envoys in Tsushima likewise occurred on Joseon's terms. In contrast to the *Joseon tongsinsa*, demands on Tsushima's performance extended to resettlement and incorporation of their population. To demonstrate this, I first outline the

[158] Hellyer, *Defining Engagement*, 40.
[159] Tan, "Beyond Frontiers and Borderlands," 80.
[160] Tan, "Beyond Frontiers and Borderlands," 76-77.
[161] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations*, 24-34.
[162] William H. McCullough, "The Heian court, 794-1070," Chap. 1 in *The Cambridge History of Japan Volume 2: Heian Japan*, eds. Donald H. Shivley and William H. McCullough (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 95.
[163] Seyock, "Pirates and traders on Tsushima Island," 96-97.

composition of missions to and from Tsushima. Second, I demonstrate Joseon's monopoly in mobilising Tsushima in these performances. Third, I detail how Joseon presented encounters with Tsushima, and by extension Japan, within their order.

Composition of missions to and from Tsushima demonstrate the extent of its incorporation within Joseon's order. Initially, Tsushima received the rank of *Manho*, giving the Sō, and by extension Japan, equivalent rank to the Mongols.[164] Expansion of relations under the Ashikaga bakufu saw the *Haedong chegguki* (Record of Reception) establish the number of ships that could be dispatched, reception protocols, voyage expenses, port rules, and formalities associated with entertainment on a four-rank system. First-rank envoys were reserved for the 'King of Japan'. Second-rank envoys encompassed major clans including "Hatakeyama, Hosokawa, Sabue (Shiba), Kyōgoku, Yamana, Ōuchi and Shōni." Third-rank envoys consisted of Kyushu *tandai* (bakufu officials) and the Sō clan. Fourth-rank envoys comprised submitting pirates.[165] From 1413 to 1438, the Sō and Sōda dispatched 191 and 89 missions respectively, with total Japanese missions numbering 432.[166] The Ashikaga themselves only dispatched sixty missions.[167] For Joseon, composition of missions to Tsushima confirmed its status as Korean territory. This was not hidden, with Sō Sadamori receiving a personal seal in 1419 instructing communications be addressed to the Gyeongsang Governor who administered 'Taemado'.[168] Missions included the *Munwigwam* (Envoy of Inquiry and Comfort), *Dohae Yokgwan* (Crossing the Sea Interpreter) and even *tongsinsa* sporadically. Furthermore, between 1418 and 1496 Joseon assigned officials to civil and military posts they established in Tsushima.[169] These included domestic officials, reception officials, and investigating officers.[170] Sending *gyeongjagwan* (provincial inspectors) and providing 1000 *koku* of rice occurred in-line with the king's duty to his subjects and asserted royal authority.[171] While control over its composition declined under the Tokugawa, Joseon's control over Tsushima allowed it to dictate Japanese identity within its boundaries.

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[164] McCune, "The Exchange of Envoys," 319.
[165] Kenneth R. Robinson, "Centering the King of Chosŏn: Aspects of Korean Maritime Diplomacy, 1392-1592," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 1 (2000): 110-112.
[166] Tan, "Beyond Frontiers and Borderlands," 99-100.
[167] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology*, 23.
[168] Robinson, "The Tsushima Governor," 32.
[169] McCune, "The Exchange of Envoys," 318.
[170] Kenneth R. Robinson, "An Island's Place in History: Tsushima in Japan and in Chosŏn, 1392-1592," *Korean Studies* 30 (2006): 49.
[171] Tan, "Beyond Frontiers and Borderlands," 78-79.

Mobilisation reinforced the control Joseon held over movement within its space which communicated their understanding of Tsushima and Japan's status. Compared with other missions discussed in this project, the journey between Tsushima and the Korean peninsula was a brief crossing across the Tsushima Strait. The Sō dispatched envoys to inform on the death and succession of their ruler.[172] The *munin* system imposing maritime controls has significant debate over its status implications. Rather than 'certificates for crossing by ship', the term 'travel permits' conveys Joseon's understanding of this system as an expansion of domestic controls. More broadly, the *munin* system operated at odds with the Ming as diplomacy and trade could not nominally occur without reference to their mutual investiture in the Ming order.[173] Conversely, the *munin* system centred Joseon's king as the central figure in authorising relations. From 1407, traders required *haenjang* (documents) and by 1418 *toseo* (copper seals) for Japanese actors to demonstrate investiture within Joseon's order.[174] The four-rank system further dictated the time Japanese actors could reside in Joseon's ports. First-rank envoys could reside indefinitely whereas those from the second-, third-, and fourth-rank were restricted to thirty-five, ten, and five days respectively.[175]

Although the Tokugawa bakufu reduced the number of Japanese actors Joseon could mobilise, it continued structuring relations with Tsushima. Joseon reduced interactions with Japan following Hideyoshi's invasion. It limited interactions to Tsushima and reduced accessible ports to Busan. By the Tokugawa, the number of travel routes declined from three to just the Waegwan. These routes had been closed as they had provided geographical knowledge to Hideyoshi prior to his invasions.[176] Relations were conducted through the *munwigwam* establishing protocol for gift exchange. Formal diplomacy consisted of three annual envoys - the *teuksongsa* (Special Envoys), *sudoseo-seon* (Ships from Japanese Officials Granted Seals) and *sujik-seon* (Ships from Japanese Officials Granted Titles). Furthermore, *chawae* (Japanese Messengers) were sent by the Sō to deliver news such as the shōgun's death, requests for the dispatch of *tongsinsa*, or repatriating Japanese castaways.[177] The *teukseongsa* constituted most interactions, occurring three times each year before declining to one welcoming official by 1635. Next *sudeo-seon* allowed holders to dispatch

[172] Tan, "Beyond Frontiers and Borderlands," 99-100.
[173] Kim Pyŏngha, *Yijo chŏngi tae-Il muyŏk yŏngu* (Seoul: Hanguk yŏnguwŏn, 1969), Cited in Robinson, "The Tsushima Governor," 24-25.
[174] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 18-20.
[175] Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology*, 74.
[176] Robinson, "An Island's Place in History," 49.
[177] McCune, "The Exchange of Envoys," 317-320.

annual 'seal ships' for trade. Six had been dispatched, however three holders did not send ships while the remaining two surrendered their privileges to Tsushima. Likewise, the *sujik-seon* held the right to dispatch an annual 'title ship'. While five Japanese officials received this status, at the request of the Sō these were again surrendered.[178] As will be seen, control over mobilisation allowed Joseon to dictate Tsushima's performance across the early modern period.

Presentation of Tsushima was based on Joseon's accounts of the Waegwan. Alongside travel diaries produced by members of successive *Joseon tongsinsa*, administrative texts guiding officials in managing Tsushima merchants informed perceptions on the Japanese character among Joseon's elite. Accounts drew parallels between the poor conduct of Waegwan residents and Hideyoshi's invasions. Restrictions on their movement reinforced negative perceptions of Japanese as untrustworthy. For example, accounts of the Dongnae Magistrate overseeing the area encompassing the Waegwan highlight criminal activity associated with the Japanese, with particular emphasis on their flouting restrictions on movement. Therefore, accounts stress the necessity of Joseon's court assigning their most capable officials to the position of Dongnae Magistrate considering these difficulties.[179] Administrative texts also present bigoted attitudes towards Japanese. From the seventeenth-century, Joseon reserved particular vitriol towards sexual relationships between Korean women and Japanese men. Illegal within Joseon, particularly severe punishments including beheading were outlined in these texts. Reflecting fears of miscegenation, it reinforced negative perceptions of Japan.[180] Finally, the Waegwan is presented as a financial burden with the *Yeollyosil Gisul* claiming it consumed half the tax revenue drawn from Gyeongsang Province and comparing Tsushima's merchants to a locust swarm.[181] Altogether, the Waegwan presented

> a severe economic drain with an inexhaustible appetite; a difficult administrative challenge that demanded, even occasionally consumed, good men; and a pernicious establishment that defied Korean authority, bred crime, and threatened to subvert the integrity of the society and polity.[182]

[178] McCune, "The Exchange of Envoys," 321-323.
[179] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 153-167.
[180] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 192-209.
[181] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 213.
[182] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 216.

Accounts in these administrative texts highlighted negative interactions with Tsushima that circulated beyond the immediacy of Waegwan among Joseon's elite.

Performance Strategies

While Joseon established interaction rituals structuring diplomacy and trade with Tsushima in-line with their authority claims and normative agenda, these performances served as recurring sites of contestation. Both actors used performance strategies to pursue their interests. As these interaction rituals occurred within Joseon's space, it allowed them to control Tsushima's movements leaving them vulnerable to these strategies. Simultaneously it allowed both the Ashikaga and Tokugawa to distance themselves from contradictory performances. Although Tsushima proved unable to change the formal meanings of interaction rituals between them, performance strategies provided a means to achieve their own goals at the intersection of these orders. They did so by exploiting these interaction rituals to their advantage.

Confrontation

Confrontation directly challenged Joseon's order-building project and efforts to ensure Tsushima performed in-line with the formal meanings of interaction rituals. The importance of maritime controls and other movement restrictions to facilitating this meant open defiance of interaction rituals came to be Tsushima's most effective strategy. It originates in the Disturbance of the Three Ports in 1510 wherein Joseon threatened to expel all Japanese beyond the permitted sixty households. Enforcing this resulted in the death of four Japanese men over a fishing dispute. As this threatened trade, the Sō offered assurances that if riots broke out it would provide support. The conflict saw Japanese inhabitants seize the Magistrates Office in Busan and Naeipo (located within the district of Jinhae today which forms part of Changwon) while Sō vessels ransacked Geojedo off Busan's coast. A Joseon counterattack defeated the rioters and briefly severed relations. Only the intercession of the Ashikaga shōgun on the request of the Sō restored relations in a reduced capacity.[183] Going beyond confrontation to the point of actual conflict, this incident not only demonstrates Tsushima to be an 'international' actor but set a precedent confrontation could secure concessions from Joseon.

[183] Elisonas, "The inseparable trinity," 247-248.

Never escalating again to the level of the Disturbance of the Three Ports, Tsushima continued transgressing against movement controls through acts of confrontation. Following the emergence of the Tokugawa bakufu, restriction of access to Busan did not prevent Tsushima deliberately violating these controls. Termed *nanchuel* ('disorderly exiting'), the *Byeollye jibyo* (Collection of Border Precedents) edited by the Joseon Board of Rites devotes an entire chapter to the 'wilful decision' of Tsushima merchants to leave the Waegwan and wander the countryside.[184] From 1626 to 1824, it recorded nineteen cases of *nanchuel* even as Joseon sought to combat this by relocating the Waegwan to Choryang 4.5 kilometres from Busan. These disputes often arose from exploitation by unhelpful liaisons of the Dongnae Magistrate, with marching to Busan undertaken to reflect badly on local officials. For example, famine in 1697 reduced supplies to the Waegwan and hours allocated for trading. Tsushima merchants decided to provoke a riot when marching to Busan to force Joseon to improve conditions. Ordinary Koreans rose to confront them, throwing stones and wielding bamboo sticks which resulted in a violent confrontation and Joseon officials being taken hostage. Eventually a formal apology ended this incident, with Tsushima not achieving its goals.[185] Nevertheless, the frequency Tsushima engaged in confrontation to secure its goals reflects both a willingness to rupture the equilibrium and a belief this represented a viable means to secure their goals.

Accommodation

Accommodation saw Joseon establish interaction rituals reflecting the interests of Tsushima and other regional Japanese actors. Indeed, the terms of participation better reflected their needs in contrast with their participation in Japanese order-building projects. Economic incentives facilitated the incorporation of these actors into Joseon's order. Likewise, participation afforded a higher status than the one held in either the Ashikaga or Tokugawa order. Indeed, Joseon's rhetoric towards Tsushima expressed a desire for accommodation. Following the 1419 invasion, the now retired King Emeritus Taejong's letter to Tsushima's ruler Sō Sadamori conveyed favourable terms for incorporation into Joseon's order

> Taemado [Tsushima Island] originally belonged to Kyerim [Kyŏngju] of Kyŏnsangdo [Korea]. It appears in the old record. [However], as it is small and inconvenient for traffic

[184] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 177-178.
[185] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 181-190.

> it was occupied by Japanese who were rejected by Japan and by people with nowhere to go, and they continued pirate activities… First, we recommend that the people of Tsushima submit to Korea. If they submit we offer a title of nobility and a generous stipend to the daimyo Sō Sadamori, and his deputy officials will be treated like Taira no Dōzen [a Japanese who received the high government post from Korea] … However, if they neither go back to Japan nor submit to Korea, and remain in the island planning robbery, we will send a large army and destroy the island.[186]

Though Joseon set these terms, this benefited the Sō by providing both economic incentives and recognition of their position as rulers of Tsushima rather than retainers of the Shōni.[187] Furthermore, accommodation was also used to incorporate pirate groups into Joseon's order. Two policies were employed to engage pirates. The *hangwae* policy saw Joseon offer pirate leaders land, houses, and even wives on the peninsula in return for their submission, while the *sujik* policy saw government posts and trade rights offered to pirates that 'surrendered' and ceased raiding. These reflected Joseon's approach to the Jurchen, emulating the Ming policy of *wai i chi mi* (literally 'to control and restrain wild horses and cows' but translated as 'diplomacy of restraining foreign barbarians'). While the incorporation of pirate groups undercut Sō authority, it benefited pirate chiefs in not only providing access to trade but a status in Joseon's order that was not provided by Japan. For Joseon, accommodation allowed them to use these actors as agents to monitor Tsushima.[188] Tsushima and other regional Japanese actors participated in Joseon's order willingly as its accommodative stance afforded greater economic benefits and often provided a higher status.

Manipulation

Manipulation presented a unique challenge to Joseon's order-building project. Rather than subtle alterations, manipulation entailed acts of deceit as actors not intended to participate performed within interaction rituals. Japanese merchants circumvented maritime restrictions by fabricating ranks, status, and even their country of origin. This challenged Joseon's ability to dictate when, where, and how encounters occurred. False claims were not

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[186] *Sejong taewang sillok*, 4:24a kwŏn, in *Chosŏn wanjo sillok*, vol. 2 (Seoul: Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 1955-1963): 326, Quoted in Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations*, 58-59.

[187] Indeed, the Sōda clan that also resided on Tsushima sought to challenge closer relations between Joseon and the Sō by emphasising they had no authority to engage in such relations as vassals of the Shōni. Tan, "Beyond Frontiers and Borderlands," 87-88.

[188] Tan, "Beyond Frontiers and Borderlands," 81-82.

unknown historically. In 1391, a Siamese vessel claimed to carry an Ayutthaya envoy seeking an audience with the king to receive trading rights. Without knowledge of Ayutthaya, document verification proved impossible. Similar incidents occurred in 1394 and 1398, with Joseon accepting false tribute despite gradual awareness of their manipulation.[189] Later manipulation by Japanese merchants presented a more frequent issue. For example, Inshi Ryoshin travelled to Joseon in 1473 as Vice-Envoy of the Shōgun Deputy Hatakeyama Yoshikatsu. His personal letter requested aid in supplying building material for a temple. Later records identify Hatakeyama's father and cousin sending missions. Only in 1592 did Joseon discover the Hatakeyama family never existed.[190] Claiming to represent the Ashikaga bakufu by manipulating Joseon provided an official reception in Hanseong and a greater volume of tradeable goods.[191]

Furthermore, Japanese merchants manipulated Joseon's relationships with other countries. Driven by economic interest, they nevertheless challenged the authority of Joseon's order. For example, Japanese merchants commandeered Joseon's relationship with Ryukyu. Exploiting Joseon's lack of knowledge because of their distance to avoid trade restrictions allowed Japanese merchants to locate alternate routes. While sporadic Ryukyuan missions had arrived, from Sejong's reign merchants from Hakata handled communications which included carrying official correspondence and gifts.[192] Merchants encouraged Ryukyu to create political and military posts to seek access to Joseon's ports. Beyond commandeering Ryukyu's relationship with Joseon, Japanese merchants also fabricated Ryukyuan missions. Indeed, in 1471 the envoy Nobushige passed on a letter from the recently deceased King Shō Toku requesting a split tally seal be created to confirm Ryukyuan envoy's identities. For two decades, Joseon was unaware Shō Toku's letter had been a forgery. Suspicions arose from a lack of gifts provided by 'Ryukyuan' missions whose members claimed pirates stole them. Only in 1500 did a genuine Ryukyuan mission arrive. To avoid future deception, information on their language and society was recorded. Nevertheless, of the 470 members of this mission, only twenty-two were not Japanese.[193] At its most outrageous, Japanese merchants

[189] Hung-Guk Cho, "Siamese-Korean Relations in the Late Fourteenth Century," *Journal of the Siam Society* 94 (2006): 9-25.
[190] Kenneth R. Robinson, "The Imposter Branch of the Hatakeyama Family and Japanese-Korea Court Relations, 1455-1580s," *Asian Cultural Studies* 25 (1999): 67.
[191] Robinson, "The Imposter Branch of the Hatakeyama Family, 68.
[192] Atsushi Kobata and Mitsugu Matsuda, *Ryukyuan Relations with Korea and South Sea Countries: An Annotated Translation of Documents in the Rekidai Hōan* (Kyoto: Atsushi Kobata, 1969): 1-5.
[193] Robinson, Centering the King of Chosŏn," 116-121.

fabricated missions from fictional countries. Three embassies from the 'King of Jiuban', said to be near Ryukyu, and one from the 'King of Ezogachishima', described as north of Japan and alluding to present-day Hokkaido, reached Joseon between 1478 to 1482. Although suspicions around their authenticity meant Joseon did not bestow a rank equivalent to a king, they did receive trading rights at a lower level.[194] Although not challenging the authority claims and normative agenda of Joseon's order, these acts contravened their efforts to dictate how encounters occurred and allowed Japanese actors to exploit this to their advantage.

Avoidance

Avoidance allowed both the Ashikaga and Tokugawa bakufu to downplay tensions associated with Tsushima's position in their order-building projects. For the Ashikaga, acknowledgement of this reality created too many problems. In the aftermath of Joseon's 1419 invasion, the Ashikaga did not discuss the issue when receiving envoys from Joseon a year later.[195] Although their weakness limited possibilities in responding, avoidance allowed for better management by avoiding potential tensions. For the Tokugawa bakufu, avoidance was achieved by using Tsushima as a proxy for day-to-day relations removing them from participating in interaction rituals established by Joseon. Consequently, while Joseon performed as a subordinate in the Tokugawa order by controlling the *Joseon tongsinsa*, no equivalent opportunity existed for Joseon. Instead, the Sō performed as a tributary. Joseon required Tsushima officials to partake in interaction rituals subordinating themselves in the Waegwan. Here, officials would bow towards a wooden figure of Joseon's king. Furthermore, Joseon officials overseeing this ritual stood next to this figure to convey that Tsushima officials were submitting to them. Despite protests this be discontinued, Joseon rejected these requests.[196] Indeed, Tsushima's economic reliance on Joseon meant the Dongnae Magistrate could pressure Tsushima officials into performing these acts.[197] While humiliating, the Sō endured this to maintain relations and ensure the Tokugawa avoided being subject to these interaction rituals. Furthermore, the Tokugawa requested that Tsushima's interactions with Joseon be referred to as *pongjin* rather than *chinsang* as this implied distance rather than a domestic relationship. It downplayed implications Tsushima

[194] Kenneth R. Robinson, "Treated as Treasures: the Circulation of Sutras in Maritime Northeast Asia, from 1388 to the Mid-Sixteenth Century," *East Asian History* 21 (2001): 47.
[195] Emoto, "Border historicity and ethnographic rupture," 436-437.
[196] Lee, "Chosŏn Korea as Sojunghwa," 307-308.
[197] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 147-151.

was Korean territory.[198] As such, Tsushima's relationship with Joseon allowed for Japanese rulers to avoid interaction rituals challenging their order-building project.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the Joseon order-building project was least successful in establishing its own hierarchy because of the demands imposed by relations with its neighbours. Over the course of the early modern period, Joseon's order declined in its capacity to incorporate neighbouring actors within its hierarchy based on their authority claims and normative agenda. As such, compared with the Tokugawa or Đại Việt their order was far more limited. Nevertheless, it was never a passive actor and consistently maintained its own efforts at constructing order contradicting its neighbour's efforts. Through a combination the *munin* system's maritime controls or incorporation of foreign actors as *hyanghwain*, Joseon maintained interaction rituals positioning itself as the *sojunghwa*. On the inside, the logic of appropriateness sought to convey their cultural superiority even as such demands on behaviour were not imposed on successive dynasties in China to prevent destabilising the equilibrium of their relationship. Conversely, on the outside Joseon conformed to the demands imposed upon them as they performed within the order-building projects of neighbouring actors. Thus, while entrenched norms existed, this did not produce shared understandings of status despite Joseon's image as the 'model tributary'. Despite the considerable alignment around the formal meanings of interaction rituals and the protocol structuring their performance, Joseon often held subjective understandings at odds with these reflected in their dispositions. Segmentation once again allowed actors to hide performances clashing with their own efforts to construct order. Joseon could tolerate conflicting performances taking place in both Chinese and Japanese spaces through role distancing just as foreign actors did so when performing within their space. Through this choreography, its order could exist within polycentric hierarchy to the extent that was possible.

Like the other order-building projects of this period, the use of performance strategies proved necessary in managing tensions between them on an ongoing basis. This remained a pressing issue as the Joseon order intersected with both neighbouring order-building projects. In their relationship with both the Ming and Qing dynasty, Joseon sought to balance subordination within their orders against their own efforts. Although significant alignment

[198] Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 26-27.

existed between Joseon and Ming, both actors nevertheless maintained distinct order-building projects that existed in tension. Here, competing efforts by Joseon and the Ming to incorporate Jurchen communities alongside posturing related to their respective dedication to Neo-Confucian propriety demonstrate clear points of tension. Nevertheless, this pales in comparison to the tension brought by Joseon's incorporation into the Qing order by force. While Joseon confirmed their subordination to the Qing through ongoing interaction rituals, it actively sought to maintain a distance as its order continued performing in direct contradiction. Relations with Tsushima and other regional actors in Japan by contrast took place on terms established by Joseon and stood in tension with their Japanese counterparts. Just as Joseon struggled to prevent changes to the performance of the *Joseon tongsinsa* within Japan, both the Ashikaga and Tokugawa bakufu could not fully prevent the incorporation of Tsushima and other regional actors into Joseon's order. In light of the tensions found in Joseon's relationship with its neighbours, performance strategies provided the method on which to manage this on a day-to-day basis.

Chapter Five – The Đại Việt Order-Building Projects

The emergence of the Nguyễn dynasty in 1802 ended three centuries of protracted internal conflict. Seeking to stabilise relations with the Qing, 'Emperor' Gia Long (r. 1802-1820) sought investiture as 'king'. Furthermore, he requested his country be named 'Nan Yue', or 'Nam Việt' as it would be rendered in Vietnamese.[1] Historically, Chinese emperors bestowed names upon countries of invested rulers. Nevertheless, this request met with anger, with the Jiaqing Emperor stating

> "These two characters they wish to be bestowed, "Nan Yue," absolutely will not do. The name "Nan Yue" is extremely broad. Examining prior histories shows that it includes the area that is now Guangdong and Guangxi. Nguyen Phuc Anh [Gia Long] is a little Yi [foreigner] from a marginal area. Even if he possesses all of Annan, the country is still no more than the ancient territory of Jiaozhi [northern Vietnam]. How can he suddenly start calling it "Nan Yue"? How do we know that he does not want to build himself up to the outer Yi, and has for that reason requested to change the name of the country?"[2]

This exchange brought their conflicting authority claims and diverging normative agendas to the fore. 'Nam Việt' linked the Nguyễn with the ancient Nanyue kingdom (204-111 BCE), demonstrating the longevity of Vietnamese civilization by linking them to a "powerful historic dynasty" that resisted northern rule for almost a century.[3] To the Qing, this act appropriated China's civilizational heritage and implied territorial claims over Guangxi and Guangzhou which had been territories of ancient Nanyue. Furthermore, it asserted parity which challenged "the Chinese order by positing a cultural hub beyond their borders… Chinese observers were made profoundly uncomfortable by the intimation of a center of classical culture outside of the Central Country."[4] Following threats of severing diplomatic relations, a compromise reversed the character order to obfuscate these implications, rendering the polity 'Yue Nan' or 'Việt Nam'.[5] This compromise did not last, with the

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[1] The name 'Vietnam' represents a modern term used for ease of reference in light of the continuity existing between the historical polities inhabiting the rough boundaries of present-day Vietnam. Instead, this project uses the term 'Đại Việt' as employed by the successive Lý, Trần, Hồ, Lê, Mạc, Tây Sơn, and Nguyễn dynasties in referring to the country they ruled.

[2] *Qing Shilu Yuenan Miandian Taiguo Laowo Shiliao* (Kunming: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe, 1986): 282, Quoted in Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 2.

[3] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 2.

[4] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 6.

[5] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 1-4.

Nguyễn reverting to 'Đại Việt' in 1812 and then 'Đại Nam' ('Great South') in 1838. A jade seal inscribed 'Royal Seal of Đại Nam's Son of Heaven' was affixed to all documents bar those addressed to the Qing.[6] Likewise, the Qing reverted to 'Annam' ('Pacified South') in reference to its conquest by China in the first millennium.[7] A contradiction therefore existed between the statuses assigned to the Nguyễn in both order-building projects.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how Đại Việt order-building projects maintained autonomy vis-à-vis competing orders. Existing accounts in IR focus on Đại Việt submitting to the dynasties ruling China based on realpolitik calculations to maintain autonomy or instead out of genuine affection due to shared culture.[8] While this allows us to interrogate how Đại Việt accommodated the Ming and Qing, it does not consider Đại Việt order-building projects on their terms. I explore how the Lê, Mạc, Tây Sơn, and Nguyễn dynasties each pursued hierarchical orders. In contrast to the Tokugawa and Joseon order-building projects, conflict produced several Đại Việt orders. Both the Lê and Mạc pursued distinct orders for over a century simultaneously. Later, the Lê became puppets of the Trịnh lords in the north who opposed the future Nguyễn dynasty ruling in the south. For two centuries the Nguyễn referred to themselves as Đàng Trong ('Inner Land').[9] In turn, they were recognised by Europeans and wider Asia as 'Cochinchina' or 'Quinam' among other names.[10] The Đại Việt order-building projects contended not only with Chinese and Southeast Asian efforts, but those of other Vietnamese actors.

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[6] Yu, "Vietnam-China Relations in the 19th Century," 103; Choi Byung Wook, *Southern Vietnam under the Reign of Minh Mạng (1820-1841): Central Policies and Local Response* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004): 131-133.

[7] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 4.

[8] David C. Kang et al., "War, Rebellion, and Intervention under Hierarchy: Vietnam-China Relations, 1365 to 1841," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63, no. 4 (2019): 898; Kosal Path, "The Duality of Vietnam's Deference and Resistance to China," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 29, no. 3 (2018): 506-508; Brantly Womack, *China and Vietnam: The Politics of Asymmetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 117-141; James A. Anderson, "Distinguishing between China and Vietnam: Three Relational Equilibriums in Sino-Vietnamese Relations," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13, no. 2 (2013): 259-280.

[9] The term 'Nam Hà' has been proposed as an alternate name to Đàng Trong considering the perceived positive connotations it conveys of the polity in English language scholarship not reflected in historical sources. While this project does incorporate critical accounts of the Nguyễn's rule of southern Vietnam, it retains the term Đàng Trong considering its continued prominence in historical scholarship. Liam C. Kelley, "Taxation and Military Conscription in Early Modern Vietnam: Nguyễn Đàng Trong in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 15, no. 2 (2020): 3.

[10] Li Tana, *Nguyễn Cochinchina: Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998); Li Tana, "The inner region: a social and economic history of Nguyen Vietnam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," PhD Diss., (Australian National University, 1992): 4-5, 63, 77.

Đại Việt order-building projects faced challenges both familiar and distinct to early modern East Asia. First, conflict and division presented hard barriers to Đại Việt orders. Competing Đại Việt polities undermined each other's authority claims and normative agendas alongside their ability to undertake segmentation. Second, the Đại Việt order-building projects emerged through territorial conquest. This expansion from the eleventh to nineteenth century is known as *Nam tiến* ('southward advance' or 'March to the south'). Initially, a product of Việt Minh nationalist historiography, scholars in the Republic of Vietnam placed particular emphasis on its importance as it conveyed 'southern exceptionalism' in Vietnamese history which the ruling regime could draw upon to contrast itself with its northern enemy in the mid-twentieth century. It describes a narrative of inevitable expansion into modern Vietnam's borders. In practice, it was a series of separate encounters and resulting conflicts independent of one another over a millennium.[11] It saw both Cambodia and the Laotian kingdoms lose considerable territory while the Champa inhabiting present-day central Vietnam were conquered outright. They saw their identities either heterogeneously constructed by the Đại Việt order or assimilated into Vietnamese culture to achieve homogenisation at different times. Nevertheless, conquest of territory and enforcing their understanding was not always possible.

Đại Việt serves as a midway point between Tokugawa Japan and Joseon Korea in pursuing a competing hierarchy against the prevailing Sinocentric order. Like wider East Asia, challenges existed in ensuring interaction rituals reflected their understanding as shared Neo-Confucianism did not produce consensus on status. Distinct from other cases is Theravada Buddhism's continuing prominence as successive Đại Việt orders encountered it in their relationships throughout Southeast Asia, forcing either accommodation or rejection of these beliefs. For example, Nguyễn rulers alternated between performing as *chakravartin* or marginalised Buddhism in favour of Neo-Confucianism. While these tensions are present in earlier chapters, they are more pronounced here. Furthermore, geography created problems for Đại Việt orders. While Korea and Japan closed their seacoast to achieve segmentation within cohesive boundaries and controlled their interaction capacity, Đại Việt struggled to

[11] Brian A. Zottoli, "Reconceptualizing Southern Vietnamese History from the 15th to 18th Centuries: Competition along the Coasts from Guangdong to Cambodia," PhD Diss., (University of Michigan, 2011): 4-5; Keith Taylor, "Surface Orientations in Vietnam: Beyond Histories of Nation and Region," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57, no. 4 (1998): 951; Claudine Ang, "Regionalism in Southern Narratives of Vietnamese History: The Case of the "Southern Advance" [*Nam Tiến*]," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 8, no. 3 (2013): 1-26.

close their multiethnic land frontiers, posing significant physical barriers to segmentation.[12] This limited the effectiveness of segmentation as a strategy for maintaining a distinct order.

I argue Đại Việt order-building projects proved successful in establishing hierarchies independent of successive dynasties ruling China. In contrast to Tokugawa Japan or Joseon Korea, competing polities shared the 'Vietnamese' identity prior to Đại Việt's unification in the nineteenth century. Removed from a singular focus on their relationship with China, the extent of these ambitions becomes clearer. Segmentation through maritime controls was symptomatic of wider efforts to ensure all movement recognised their authority. Conquest represented another departure as expansion eliminated rival polities and incorporated them on Vietnamese terms. Therefore, while successive dynasties adapted Chinese thought and practice to a Vietnamese context, this admiration belied simultaneous apprehension as memories of historical conquest lingered. This is reflected by consistent use of the title 'emperor' (v. *hoàng đế*) to position their realm as a co-equal 'domain of manifest civility' even while recognising the Chinese emperor's suzerainty. Conversely, in the south Buddhism legitimised ruler's authority and structured diplomacy with Southeast Asia. Such efforts occurred agnostic to considerations of China. Despite limitations posed by competing Đại Việt orders, they remained consistent in pushing their authority claims and normative agendas even to the extent of using force.

This chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by providing historical context for Đại Việt order-building projects. Here, I centre the ongoing struggle for Đại Việt rulers to establish order as competing actors undermined efforts to establish order. This was further compounded by difficulties in exerting control as the shift to Neo-Confucianism increasingly clashed with local beliefs in the early modern period. Then, I outline how Đại Việt polities undertook segmentation of space. Despite conflicting efforts, successive dynasties and/or powerful regional elites enforced maritime controls like wider East Asia. Furthermore, movement controls facilitated the construction of order by establishing interaction rituals. Next, I introduce my sub-cases, first looking at how Đại Việt managed relations with the Ming and Qing. Then, I explore Đại Việt's incorporation of Cambodia within the context of wider relations with Southeast Asia. I outline the performance strategies managing tensions within interaction rituals as competing order-building projects intersected.

[12] Alexander Woodside, "Territorial Order and Collective-Identity Tensions in Confucian Asia: China, Vietnam, Korea," *Daedalus* 127, no. 3 (1998): 204.

Historical Context

The Đại Việt order-building projects reflected broader historical efforts of Vietnamese actors to assert their understandings of status. A plethora of Đại Việt polities existed, presenting opportunities to develop and express distinct understandings of 'Vietnamese' identity. Here, the basis of legitimate authority could differ significantly.[13] Alongside this, Đại Việt and its predecessors experienced the push and pull between borrowing ideological resources and emulating Chinese institutions and asserting an autonomous identity which generated considerable tension. Vietnamese historiography veers between these two extremes. The 'Little China' thesis produced under French colonialism argues imitation of Chinese culture and institutions over a millennium of direct rule allowed Đại Việt to emerge as an autonomous polity. Conversely, nationalist historiography argue Vietnamese identity solidified through resistance to China.[14] As Keith Taylor argues

> It is sometimes imagined that an indigenous core of "Vietnamneseness" survived unscathed through the fire of Chinese domination… the Vietnamese language survived, as did mythical traditions from the pre-Chinese period. But both the Vietnamese language and the mythical traditions were transformed through intimate contact with China.[15]

As such, how Vietnamese actors constructed order reflected the tensions around adapting such ideas to their specific context. In this section, I briefly chart this dynamic across Vietnamese history. First, I highlight how the various origin myths, whether referencing classical civilization or local beliefs, asserted equality with China. Second, I establish the push and pull between emulation and resistance occurring across the Bắc thuộc ('Belonging to the North') period. Third, I show how Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism offered a basis Đại Việt orders could legitimise their authority. Fourth, I capture tensions associated with hegemonic syncretism as the imposition of Neo-Confucianism over local beliefs was resisted.

Whether expressed through reference to classical civilization or derived from local beliefs, Đại Việt's mythical origins commonly emphasised equality with China. Liam C. Kelley identifies how Vietnamese understandings of themselves existing as a distinct people before Chinese rule came about in the process of recording their history as they became an

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[13] Li Tana, "An Alternative Vietnam? The Nguyen Kingdom in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29, no. 1 (1998): 121.
[14] Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 9-17; Patricia M. Pelley, *Postcolonial Vietnam: New Histories of the National Past* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002): 7-8.
[15] Keith Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1991): viii.

autonomous polity in the tenth century.[16] Under the Lý (1009-1225) and Trần (1225-1400), two genre of texts codified Đại Việt's origins. 'Wild tales' drew on folklore in contrast with official histories produced by scholar-officials for ruling dynasties emulating Chinese historiography.[17] The fifteenth-century *Lĩnh Nam chích quái* ('Selection of Strange Tales in Linh Nam') identifies the semi-legendary Văn Lang kingdom and its founder Lạc Long Quân as progenitors of the Vietnamese, ridding the Red River Delta of demons, teaching agriculture, and repelling northern invasion. Resistance to the 'north' represented a legitimising trope due to the text's composition following Ming conquest.[18] Official histories drew on classical civilization to emphasise Đại Việt's separate origin from China. The *Đại Việt sử lược* ('Brief History of the Viet') emphasises Đại Việt's predecessors originated almost a millennium earlier to China's legendary Xia dynasty. Likewise, the *Đại Việt sử ký* ('Annals of Đại Việt') sees Nanyue as the founding kingdom and emphasises its Vietnamese identity.[19] Only the *An Nam chí lược* ('Abbreviated Records of Annam') identifies Đại Việt's origin as China's southernmost province. Unsurprisingly, its author Lê Tắc composed this text while exiled at the Yuan court.[20] Despite no singular origin myth, emphasis on distinction and equality with China remained consistent and informed future authority claims and normative agendas.

Both emulation of and resistance towards Chinese dynasties recurred throughout the period leading to Đại Việt's emergence. Known in Vietnamese historiography as *Bắc thuộc*, Chinese rule extended from 111 BCE to 938 CE and saw present-day Northern Vietnam directly incorporated as Jiaozhi (v. Giao Chỉ). Centred on the Red River Delta, it connected local systems to successive Chinese dynasties, transferring institutional knowledge and cultural models and facilitating migration of Chinese persons which intersected with pre-existing local beliefs. Here, it "was relatively easy for people to shift back and forth between these two perspectives".[21] Nevertheless, waning Chinese power saw regional elites rebel and legitimise their authority within their local context. Rebel figures such as the Trưng sisters (c. 14–c. 43), Lady Triệu (226-248), Lý Nam Đế or Lý Bôn (503-548), and Ngô Quyền (898-

[16] Liam C. Kelley, "The Biography of the Hồng Bàng Clan as a Medieval Vietnamese Invented Tradition," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 7, no. 2 (2012): 87-130.
[17] E.S. Ungar, "From Myth to History: Imagined Polities in 14th Century Vietnam," in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, eds. David G. Marr and A.C. Milner (Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 1986): 177.
[18] Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 1.
[19] Ungar, "From Myth to History," 180-182.
[20] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 15-17.
[21] Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 55.

944) developed spirit cults legitimising future rulers. Short-lived polities such as Vạn Xuân (544-602) established themselves as successors to Nanyue, Âu Lạc and Văn Lang to assert an independent history.[22] Indeed, an inside/outside dynamic emerged, with the term *Trong Đế Ngoài Vương* or 'emperor at home, king abroad' originating in the relationship between Han China and Nanyue. Records in the *Shiji* highlight Nanyue's rulers styling themselves 'emperor' despite formal rebuke from Han, only using 'king' when dispatching envoys to China.[23] Another example is Shi Xie (v. Sĩ Nhiếp) who nominally served as 'Remote Tranquillity General' supporting the Han governor in Jiaozhi during the second century. In practice, this title legitimised his de-facto rule and private army.[24] The *Việt điện u linh tập* ('Potent Spirits of the Viet Domain') from 1329 records him as 'King Sĩ' and identifies a spirit cult existing around him.[25] Even under the oscillating control of Chinese dynasties across this period, Vietnamese actors pursued an independent basis for authority. Only with King Ngô Quyền's (r. 939-944) victory at Bạch Đằng River in 938 did Đại Việt secure de-facto independence.[26]

Buddhism legitimised the authority of early Đại Việt ruling dynasties who emulated Southeast Asia as much as China. Both the Lý and Trần emulated Buddhist kingship, situating the ruler as a personal conduit between the kingdom and cosmos as a repository of karma known as a *dharmaraja*.[27] The extent of these beliefs is seen in how the Lý justified coming to power in 1009 as Emperor Lý Thái Tổ (r. 1009-1028) relied on Buddhist temples to create prophecies foretelling his rise.[28] A royal cult worshipping the gods Indra and Brahma was established emulating Champa and the Khmer at Angkor. In 1016, over 1000 monks were ordained and two temples constructed, with an abhiseka ceremony (meaning 'bathing of the divinity to whom worship is offered' in Sanskrit) consecrating Lý Thái Tổ's rule.[29] Here, interaction rituals legitimised their authority independent of China and through

[22] Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 107-110.
[23] "*Shi ji* 10: The Basic Annals of Emperor Wen the Filial," 305-306; "*Shi ji* 113: The Account of Southern Yue," 210.
[24] Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 57.
[25] Olga Dror, *Cult, Culture, and Authority: Princess Lieu Hanh in Vietnamese History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007): 15.
[26] Technically, the Đinh dynasty renamed their country 'Đại Cồ Việt' in 968, with this abbreviated to 'Đại Việt' by the Lý in 1054.
[27] Cuong Tu Nguyen, *Zen in Medieval Vietnam: A Study and Translation of the Thien Uyen Tap Anh* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997); Nguyen The Anh, "From Indra to Maitreya: Buddhist Influence in Vietnamese Political Thought," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 33, no. 2 (2002): 225-227.
[28] Keith Taylor, *A History of the Vietnamese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 60.
[29] Charles Orzech, "On the Subject of Abhiseka," *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, no. 13 (2011): 117; John K. Whitmore, ""Elephants Can Actually Swim": Contemporary Chinese Views of Late Ly

local beliefs.[30] The *Việt điện u linh tập* records the incorporation of the spirit cults of the Trưng sisters, Lady Triệu, Mẫu Địa ('Mother Goddess of the Earth') and the spirit of the Tô Lịch River. Hegemonic syncretism allowed Lý and Trần rulers to impose their person at the centre of local rituals. In the absence of direct central control, "Powerful regional clans were loyal to the Ly not because Ly officials could enforce compliance but because they believed in the Ly kings. They believed that the Ly kings were men of virtue, competent to deal with the supernatural powers of the land".[31] Buddhist practices allowed ruling dynasties to impose their person over the diverse local beliefs across their country.

Neo-Confucianism became the leading ideology in Đại Việt during the early modern period. Confucianism entered Đại Việt during the *Bắc thuộc* period as Chinese rule had facilitated knowledge transfer. In 1070, the Văn Miếu (Temple of Literature) was constructed to honour Confucius, with an imperial academy (v. *Quốc Tử Giám*) later established in 1076.[32] It was only under the Hồ dynasty (1400-1407) that Đại Việt incorporated Neo-Confucianism. Đại Việt adopted a triennial examination system and centralised administration based on the Six Ministries model.[33] The examination system became the means of entering the civil bureaucracy despite existing from the eleventh-century.[34] Despite expelling the Ming, the Lê dynasty (1427-1789) maintained Neo-Confucianism.[35] Under Emperor Lê Thánh Tông (r. 1460-1497) the civil bureaucracy came to the fore, with his reign representing Đại Việt's ideal of Neo-Confucian governance.[36] Nevertheless, effective power often resided beyond Neo-Confucian institutions.

Dai Viet," Chap. 6 in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, eds. David G. Marr and A.C. Milner (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 1986): 126.

[30] The *Eminent Monks of the Thien Community* (1337) records an encounter between Queen Mother Phú Thành Cám Linh Nhân (better known as Linh Nhân) and the monk Thông Biện over Buddhism's origins that states, "Out of compassion, the Buddha appeared to be born in Tianzhu (India). This is because Tianzhu is the center of the world." This exchange demonstrates Buddhists within Đại Việt conceived the world beyond narratives of the 'Central Civilization'. Quoted in "The Origins of Buddhism in Dai Viet (1096)" in *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*, eds. George E. Dutton, Jayne S. Werner, and John K. Whitmore (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012): 49.

[31] Keith Taylor, "Authority and Legitimacy in 11th Century Vietnam," Chap. 7 in *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, eds. David G. Marr and A.C. Milner (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 1986): 169-170.

[32] Trân-hàm Tân, "Étude sur le Văn-miêu de Hanoi (Temple de la Littérature)," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 45, no. 1 (1951): 89-118.

[33] *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*, 89-90.

[34] R.B. Smith, "The Cycle of Confucianization in Vietnam," Chap. 1 in *Aspects of Vietnamese History*, ed. Walter F. Vella (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1973): 6-7.

[35] Also known as the Later Lê dynasty, it should not be confused with the brief Early Lê dynasty (980-1009).

[36] John K. Whitmore, "The Development of Le Government in Fifteenth Century Vietnam," PhD Diss., (Cornell University, 1968): ix; John K. Whitmore, "Vietnamese Historical Sources: For the Reign of Le Thanh-tong (1460-1497)," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (1970): 373-374.

Imposing Neo-Confucianism came into tension with existing local practices. Whereas Buddhism had been effective in integrating local beliefs, Neo-Confucianism was far more exclusionary in its approach. Indeed, reforms imposed through the Lê Code triggered rebellions between 1511 and 1521. These erupted in western Hưng Hóa and eastern Sơn Tây in 1511 and 1512, Sơn Tây in 1515, 1516, and 1518, and Kinh Bắc and north-east Hải Dương from 1516 to 1521. In particular, the Trần Cao rebellion (1516-1521) challenged the Lê's Neo-Confucian normative agenda. Led by a pagoda keeper known as Trần Cao, he employed a syncretic combination of Buddhism, local beliefs, and memory of the Trần dynasty to construct a rival authority base. Claiming to be an incarnation of Indra and descended from the Trần, he briefly seized the capital forcing the Lê to flee.[37] Even as Đại Việt fractured into competing polities, enforcing a Neo-Confucian agenda continued. In 1663, the edit of the 'Forty-seven Rules for Teaching and Changing the People' forbade anyone becoming a Buddhist monk or nun without the ruler's approval, prohibited new temples, and banned the printing and sale of Buddhist texts (alongside Daoism and other unorthodox ideologies). The Neo-Confucian normative agenda of the Lê elite perceived local beliefs as causing the collapse of proper human relationships, reflecting broader anti-Buddhist sentiments in early modern East Asia. Marginalisation exacerbated rebellions in the eighteenth-century, with popular discontent allowing the Tây Sơn (1778-1802) to overthrow the Lê in 1789.[38] This is symptomatic of recurring tensions across Đại Việt's history as expansion into new territory brought Neo-Confucian beliefs into conflict with local practices.

Institutional Basis for the Segmentation of Space

Segmentation was central to the process of order building for competing Đại Việt polities even as their simultaneous efforts produced unique challenges to their control over spatial organisation. Conversely, territorial expansion southwards allowed Đại Việt to dictate the terms new religious, ideological, and cultural practices would be incorporated into their orders.[39] Nevertheless, controlling these ever-expanding land frontiers often saw the ritual suzerainty of dynasties outpace their actual control. Dictating the interaction rituals

[37] Nola Cooke, "Nineteenth-Century Vietnamese Confucianization in Historical Perspective: Evidence from the Palace Examinations (1463-1883)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 25, no. 2 (1994): 288-292; Thien Do, *Vietnamese Supernaturalism: Views from the Southern Region* (London: Routledge, 2003): 54.
[38] Nguyen, "From Indra to Maitreya," 237-238.
[39] Michael G. Cotter, "Towards A Social History of the Vietnamese-Southward Movement," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 9, no. 1 (1968): 12; Keith Taylor, "Regional Conflicts Among the Viet Peoples Between the 13th and 19th Centuries," in *Guerre et Paix en Asie du Sud-Est*, eds. Nguyen The Anh and Alain Forest (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998): 109, 113.

structuring everyday life within a space became critical in ensuring authority was recognised symbolically in everyday practices even if effective control lagged. Their goal was ensuring that Vietnamese emperors were recognised as the apex of a hierarchy extending beyond the boundaries of Đại Việt. First, I explore the maritime controls of various Đại Việt polities as symptomatic of wider efforts to dictate how movement occurred. I show how controlling foreign relations compelled actors to recognise their authority in practice. Second, I outline how controlling spatial organisation allowed Đại Việt polities to assign identities to foreign actors inside their boundaries. Here, I identify how Chinese migrants had their identities constructed in a manner at odds with both the Ming and Qing orders on the outside. Third, I highlight the role of conquest in the process of segmentation as newly incorporated peoples were subjected to heterogenisation or homogenisation. Pointing to the diverse ethnic minorities incorporated during the *Nam tiến,* most prominently the Champa, I demonstrate how incorporation inside Đại Việt's space allowed them to construct their identity in-line with their authority claims and normative agenda. Finally, I show the limitations imposed on segmentation arising from conflict between Đại Việt polities.

Maritime controls allowed Đại Việt polities to enforce their authority in practice by controlling movement inside their space as ruling dynasties adapted the Ming *haijin* policy to suit their ends. Unlike the other case studies, multiple Vietnamese actors imposed maritime controls simultaneously. Therefore, distinctions exist between the formal borders of Đại Việt and the effective boundaries maintained by different actors through segmentation. Lê maritime controls ensured foreign trade occurred on its terms and they alone monopolised the benefits. It assigned the port of Vân Đồn located on islands beyond Hạ Long Bay as the gateway for trade. Strict controls sought to eliminate private trade by requiring constant reports on the entry and departure of foreign vessels. To offset flouting of these restrictions in favour of self-profit, severe punishments such as demotion and imprisonment were enforced.[40] Nevertheless, the weakness of the Lê allowed the rival Trịnh and Nguyễn lords to pursue their own maritime controls simultaneously. Formally retainers of the Lê, the Trịnh served as de-facto rulers in the north and imposed maritime controls in allowing a Dutch entrepôt at Phố Hiến (present-day Hưng Yên) in 1637 and later banned Christian missionaries in 1663. Simultaneously, maritime controls allowed the Nguyễn ruling in the south to force recognition of their authority in Đàng Trong by opening Hội An to foreign trade in 1614 and

[40] 'Laws on Foreign Commerce (Fifteenth Century)' in *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition,* 101-103.

banning Christianity in 1631 in advance of comparable actions by the Trịnh.[41] Following unification, the Nguyễn maintained maritime controls by accommodating European traders like other 'barbarian' groups.[42] Nguyễn legal codes also targeted China, with the 1816 'Prohibition on Crossing National Borders for Personal Affairs and Prohibition on Going Overseas' banning cross-border trade to maintain control over the export of specific goods.[43]

By controlling spatial organisation, Đại Việt orders were able to assign identities to foreign actors inside their boundaries. Most prominently, despite their inability to secure their perceived status within Chinese order-building projects, segmentation allowed Đại Việt to assign the identity of Chinese migrants inside their boundaries. Indeed, Chinese persons held a precarious position inside Đại Việt orders. At its most extreme, they were subjected to violence. For example, Tây Sơn forces often targeted Chinese communities during their rebellion. Massacres of Chinese occurred in Đà Nẵng and Hội An in the mid-1770s. In 1782, the Tây Sơn pillaged and burned Sài Gòn, destroying the shops and vessels of Chinese merchants and killing between 4000 to 20,000 Chinese residents. Furthermore, a Tây Sơn intervention into Cambodia that same year sought out Chinese who had fled Đàng Trong and exterminated them.[44] Nevertheless, for most of the early modern period, Đại Việt's Chinese population lived under the control of successive orders. Following the rise of the Qing, Ming loyalists fled to Đại Việt to avoid persecution. Under the Lê and Trịnh, Ming loyalists were known as Minh Hương and lived in villages separate from the Vietnamese population. This allowed them to maintain their customs and beliefs at odds with Han Chinese living under the Qing. While Ming customs were tolerated inside these villages, entry into wider Vietnamese society required assimilation. In particular, the right to partake in civil service examinations required adopting a Vietnamese identity.[45] Conversely, Chinese traders residing in Đại Việt's ports were distinguished from Minh Hương and subject to different controls as Qing subjects. In the seventeenth-century, Emperor Lê Hy Tông (r. 1675-1705) imposed sumptuary laws as a condition of entry, requiring Han Chinese men to adopt a Vietnamese hairstyle and clothing within ports as the Manchu dress and the queue hairstyle required in China was considered 'barbaric'.[46] Within Đàng Trong, the Nguyễn used Chinese migrants to colonise lands annexed from Cambodia. The Nguyễn focused on settling a loyal population considering the

[41] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 261-262.
[42] 'Policy for Trading with Europeans' in *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*, 275.
[43] Yu, "Vietnam-China Relations in the 19th Century," 97.
[44] Dutton, *The Tay Son Uprising*, 202-203.
[45] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 115-116.
[46] Yu, "Vietnam-China Relations in the 19th Century," 105.

tensions surrounding incorporating conquered populations.[47] Nevertheless, despite their relationship with the Nguyễn, Chinese migrants often operated beyond their control. For example, Mạc Cửu (c. Mo Jiu) established an autonomous polity in the port of Hà Tiên around 1700 with the Cambodian king's patronage before later being invested as a vassal of the Nguyễn in 1708 which his family then ruled autonomously for three generations.[48] For Đại Việt polities, segmentation afforded the ability to construct identities for Chinese inhabitants that recognised their authority claims and normative agendas inside.

Expansion saw Đại Việt orders incorporate conquered populations inside their space and enforce movement controls structuring relations to enforce identities in-line with their order. They alternated between homogenisation policies assimilating conquered populations or heterogenisation policies dictating their identities within their order through interaction rituals. Nevertheless, they allowed local identities to exist discreetly on the periphery. These two approaches did not represent a binary but rather a toolkit drawn on independently or in concert with one another. Homogenisation represented the process of assimilation into Vietnamese culture. At its most 'benign', it offered benefits in return for abandoning local beliefs. Civil service exams in the nineteenth-century offered the potential for social mobility in return for adopting Vietnamese customs.[49] However, the case of Champa demonstrates the ruthlessness of long-term assimilation. Following their conquest in 1471, the Lê required the Cham (and other ethnic minorities) to use three characters for their names in-line with broader East Asian naming practices. Until the eighteenth-century annexation was not pursued, with the rump state of Panduranga (known in Vietnamese as Trấn Thuận Thành or the 'Principality of the Submissive Citadel') "granted the trappings of statehood" despite being effectively conquered in practice to bolster the number of foreign kingdoms paying tribute.[50] While Panduranga's ruler legitimised their position as a *dharmaraja*, he remained only a provincial governor to Đại Việt. Even their nominal territory saw Vietnamese settlement and the establishment of military colonies which undermined their autonomy.[51] Harsh taxes and a corvée labour system further disrupted local practices. By 1832,

[47] Tana, *Nguyễn Cochinchina*, 16.
[48] John D. Wong, "Improvising protocols: Two enterprising Chinese migrant families and the resourceful Nguyễn court," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 50, no. 2 (2019): 246-262.
[49] Woodside, "Territorial Order and Collective-Identity Tensions in Confucian Asia," 212.
[50] David Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French: Politics in a Tributary Kingdom, 1794-1848," PhD Diss., (University of Michigan, 1973): 67.
[51] Nicolas Weber, "The destruction and assimilation of Campā (1832-35) as seen from Cam sources," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2012): 162.-165.

Panduranga was annexed into Bình Thuận Province, with its royal family deposed and population assimilated by destroying Cham villages and its populace dispersed throughout Vietnamese villages across Đại Việt.[52]

Heterogenisation allowed local customs to exist on the periphery provided they did not challenge the authority claims or normative agenda of Đại Việt orders. Focus was on maintaining interaction rituals establishing identity in-line with an order's logic of appropriateness irrespective if this was contradicted elsewhere. For example, the Lê dynasty text *Dư địa chí* ('Geography') from 1435 contained sumptuary laws forbidding Vietnamese from adopting the clothing and languages "of the lands of the Wu [Ming], Champa, the Lao, Siam, or Zhenla [Cambodia], since doing so will bring chaos to the customs of our land."[53] Under the Nguyễn investiture of the Thổ, Nùng, Hmong (v. Mèo which is often translated as 'barbarians') occurred to extend ritual suzerainty over the periphery. Similarly, the Mường presented tribute indirectly through Laotian patrons. Such acts reconfirmed their identity to the Nguyễn and separated them from the wider Vietnamese population. Indeed, Gia Long instructed officials assigned to the southern Hà Tiên Province to "distinguish and separate people of Chinese descent, Chinese merchants, Cambodians, and Malays."[54] Separation was understood as logical, with Emperor Minh Mạng (r. 1820-1841) expressing astonishment Chinese and Malay persons lived among Siam's population and believed this would cause their downfall.[55] Although the impact of both approaches on ethnic minorities differed, segmentation and establishing interaction rituals inside allowed for Đại Việt rulers to dictate actors' identities within their order.

The ability to undertake segmentation was limited by ongoing conflict between Đại Việt polities. Đại Việt witnessed two prolonged conflicts between competing polities – the Lê-Mạc War (1533-1592) and the Trịnh-Nguyễn War (1627-1672, 1774-1777). Both the Lê and Mạc established dynasties engaged in ongoing conflict with each other. While the Lê triumphed, the Mạc lingered with Ming support until 1677. As will be discussed, their co-existence undermined the ability of both to engage in segmentation and construct order. The Trịnh-Nguyễn War represented a conflict between powerful clans whose private power

[52] Đại Việt also religiously persecuted the Cham. They forced Hindu Cham to eat beef and their Muslim counterparts' pork and lizard meat. Choi, *Southern Vietnam under the Reign of Minh Mạng*, 141.
[53] 'Regarding Cultural Influences,' in *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*, 138-139.
[54] *Đại Nam thực lục chính biên, đệ nhất, nhị, tam kỷ* (Primary compilation of the Veritable Records of the first three reigns of Imperial Vietnam) vol. 1, 43: 5, Quoted in Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 244.
[55] *Đại Nam thực lục*, vol. 2, 210: 31b, Quoted in Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 244.

outstripped the reigning Lê. Whereas the Trịnh relied on the Lê emperor to legitimise their authority, the Nguyễn in the south gradually established a normative agenda removed from the Lê and legitimised their authority claims independently. Comparisons have been drawn with the Tokugawa bakufu as in 1599 the Trịnh lord assumed the title *Nguyên soái* (generalissimo) comparable to the shōgun in formally being supreme commander of the emperor's forces who in practice ruled Đại Việt. Bureaucratic posts were dominated by the Trịnh army at the expense of officials produced through the examination system.[56] A parallel administration existed as the Trịnh maintained their own court ('*Vương phủ*') independent of the Lê and established a military district system known as the *Lục Phiên*, incorporating significant numbers of officials and eunuchs to staff these posts at the expense of existing governing institutions.[57] Nevertheless, their casus belli to expand southwards relied on the formality of rectifying Nguyễn disloyalty to the Lê.[58]

Simultaneously, southward expansion allowed Nguyễn Hoàng (r. 1558-1613) to create a space for an independent authority.[59] Rather than Neo-Confucianism, Nguyễn rulers sponsored Buddhism and local spirit cults.[60] By the eighteenth-century Nguyễn rulers took titles such as '*Võ Vương*' ('Marital King'), '*Chúa Bụt*' or '*Phật Chúa*' ('Buddhist Lord'), and '*Thiên Vương*' ('King of Heaven') independent of reference to the Lê or China.[61] Nevertheless, historical debate around the nature of Nguyễn rule over Đàng Trong remain. Both Nola Cooke and Li Tana argue Nguyễn rule over the south was military in nature. Lacking the administrative capacity to fully mobilise their population in support of their order-building project meant moves towards a civil government as in the north were largely symbolic.[62] Recently, Liam Kelley has challenged assumptions Đàng Trong had little administrative capacity and was independent of northern influences. He points to the Review and Selection System (v. *Duyệt tuyển*) to highlight the Nguyễn adapting institutions

[56] Ben Kiernan, *Việt Nam: A History from Earliest Times to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 229.
[57] Ueda Shin'ya, "On the financial structure and personnel organisation of the Trịnh Lords in seventeenth to eighteenth-century North Vietnam," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 46, no. 2 (2015): 246-273.
[58] Trinh Can, "Edict to the Peoples of Quang Nam," in *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*, eds. George E. Dutton, Jayne S. Werner and John K. Whitmore (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012): 159.
[59] Tana, *Nguyễn Cochinchina*, 37-40.
[60] Keith W. Taylor, "Nguyen Hoang and the Beginning of Vietnam's Southward Expansion," Chap. 2 in *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, and Belief*, ed. Anthony Reid (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993): 62-64.
[61] Tana, "An Alternative Vietnam?" 113-115.
[62] Nola Cooke, "Regionalism and the Nature of Nguyen Rule in Seventeenth-Century Dang Trong (Cochinchina)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29, no. 1 (1998): 122-161; Tana, *Nguyễn Cochinchina*, 37-38.

developed in the north to effectively survey and categorise the male population to facilitate taxation and military conscription. It consisted of two parts. First, a lesser examination ('*tiểu điển*') saw men between eighteen and sixty registered by local officials. Second, a great examination (*đại điển*') saw men assigned to different categories in order to mobilise them for military service and corvée labour. These consisted of 'braves' (*tráng*), 'militiamen' (*quân*), 'commoners' (*dân*), 'elderly' (*lão*), 'landless laborers' (*cố*), and those without families (*cùng*).[63] Although the scale of its enforcement is debated, it conveys how multiple Đại Việt actors pursued order by constructing the identities of those inside through spatial organisation.

Relations with China

Relations between Đại Việt and both the Ming and Qing orders were marked by underlying disagreements over Vietnamese identity which recurred across interaction rituals. Like Joseon, asymmetries in their capabilities and memories of historical conquest saw Đại Việt hesitant to destabilise the relationship's equilibrium. While ongoing participation established material security, it often threatened ontological security and undermined the legitimacy of Đại Việt orders. This section proceeds as follows. First, I establish the context of the relationship. Here, recurring conflicts reflect the lingering unwillingness of dynasties ruling China to recognise 'Đại Việt' as an independent realm. Second, I outline the nature of interaction rituals constituting formal diplomacy through Đại Việt's embassies known as Như Thanh Sứ by the Nguyễn alongside reciprocal missions from 'Chinese' envoys through their composition, mobilisation, and presentation. An inability to dictate the protocol structuring interaction rituals left Đại Việt vulnerable as formal meanings were altered at their Chinese counterparts' discretion. Third, I show how performance strategies contested the status implications of interaction rituals. For successive dynasties ruling Đại Việt, maintaining their claims to constitute a *Văn Hiến Chi Bang* ('domain of manifest civility') co-equal to China required ongoing role-distancing from interaction rituals conveying the opposite.

Context

The relationship between ruling dynasties in Đại Việt and China were marked by underlying tensions as their order-building projects contradicted. Tension was driven not just by conflict, but rather competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas. The

[63] Kelley, "Taxation and Military Conscription in Early Modern Vietnam," 10.

Khâm định Việt sử Thông giám cương mục ('The Imperially Ordered Annotated Text Completely Reflecting the History of Viet') compiled in 1884 records 279 incidents of violence of which only 8.4 percent are conflicts with China between 1365 and 1789.[64] Here, familiar arguments identify Confucian norms establishing not only shared understandings between them but a desire among Đại Việt's elite to participate within a Sinocentric hierarchy.[65] Indeed, admiration existed as Vietnamese scholar-officials upheld the *Văn Hiến Chi Bang* and its written texts and morality as establishing civilizational standards.[66] Nevertheless, veneration of these ideals did not produce consensus. Đại Việt saw itself and China as the Southern and Northern Country descending from the same classical civilization instead of simply being 'Annam' which had broken away from China.[67] This understanding of civilizational equality challenged Chinese dynasties who "did not reckon on spawning a sovereign southern emperor who challenged the Ming's exclusive cosmological control of All-under-Heaven."[68] Đại Việt legitimised authority not through investiture, but repositioning collective beliefs, culture, and norms to assert equality and at times superiority.[69] They remained flexible in situating their identity within these orders. 'Semantic rigidity' did not exist as Đại Việt maintained its name in all interactions but those with China where they continued calling themselves 'Annam'. Despite this, competing Đại Việt orders remained a point of tension.

Conflicts centred on Đại Việt's status as an independent polity. The Song–Đại Cồ Việt War (981), Song–Đại Việt War (1075-1077), the Yuan invasions (1258, 1282-1284, 1285, and 1287-1288), and the Ming–Đại Ngu War (1406-1407) centred on Chinese dynasties perceived right to intercede into domestic affairs as the self-held prerogative of Chinese emperors. Indeed, the Ming invasion and annexation best demonstrates Chinese efforts to eliminate an autonomous Đại Việt order. Tensions arose as the Hồ deposed their Trần predecessors and manipulated the Ming to hide their actions to secure investiture. This was short-sighted as Trần survivors informed the Yongle Emperor of this deception. Furthermore, the Hồ ignored Ming instructions to cease expansion against Champa much like

[64] Kang et al., "War, Rebellion, and Intervention under Hierarchy," 907.
[65] Kang et al., "War, Rebellion, and Intervention under Hierarchy," 918-919.
[66] Liam C. Kelley, "Vietnam as a 'Domain of Manifest Civility' (Văn Hiến Chi Bang)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 34, no. 1 (2003): 65; Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 31-36.
[67] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 5.
[68] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 110.
[69] Chia, "Social Positioning and International Order Contestation," 307.

their predecessors. Furthermore, border disputes existed over Siming Prefecture in Guangxi.[70] Consequently, Ming annexation and the reestablishment of Jiaozhi Province resembled a 'civilizing mission' as the Yongle Emperor considered Đại Việt's assertions of independence 'unconvincing rhetoric'.[71] It pushed "the 'egocentricity' of their cultural position with little heed for the local patterns in order to make Vietnam part of the [Ming] Empire."[72] 'Heterodox' texts describing Đại Việt as an independent kingdom or those critical of Chinese dynasties were confiscated or destroyed.[73] Furthermore, Vietnamese commentaries on Confucian classics asserting equality were banned.[74] The extremity of these actions reveal how separate Đại Việt orders were perceived as challenges by their Chinese counterparts.

Interaction rituals further highlight underlying tensions around investiture between their respective order-building projects. While stabilising relations with China, the nature of these interaction rituals imposed on Đại Việt's rulers challenged their identity. Early dynasties struggled to stabilise relations, with the Ngô dynasty (939-968) never receiving investiture despite requests as the Song did not acknowledge their independence. As discussed in the previous chapter, withholding investiture was similarly employed by the Ming in relations with Joseon. When investiture did occur, the Song gave Vietnamese rulers ranks contradicting subjective understandings. Consequently, all references to Song investiture were removed from court documents.[75] Both the Đinh (968-980) and Early Lê (980-1009) received ranks denoting them not as independent rulers but instead Song officials. Đinh Bộ Lĩnh (r. 968-979) was invested as 'Commandery Prince of Jiaozhi' but ignored this title, declaring himself 'emperor' and investing his heir as 'King of Nanyue'.[76] Similarly, Lê Hoàn (r. 980-1005) received the ranks of 'Commandery Prince of Jiaozhi' and 'Commissioner of the Army Which Quiets the Sea' before eventually becoming 'King of

[70] John K. Whitmore, *Vietnam, Ho Quy Ly, and the Ming: 1371-1421* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1985): 80-81.
[71] During their occupation, the Ming sought to eliminate markers of a distinct Vietnamese identity. The tombs and shrines of the Trần royal family were destroyed to remove potential opposition. For everyday persons, Neo-Confucian sumptuary laws were implemented forbidding women to wear skirts and wear Ming clothing in-line with their standards for feminine modesty. Taylor, *A History of the Vietnamese*, 180, 189.
[72] John K. Whitmore, "Chiao-Chih and Neo-Confucianism: The Ming Attempt to Transform Vietnam," *Ming Studies*, no. 1 (1977): 65.
[73] Taylor, *A History of the Vietnamese*, 180.
[74] Alexander Ong Eng An, "Contextualising the Book-Burning Episode during the Ming Invasion and Occupation of Vietnam," Chap. 6 in *Southeast Asia in the Fifteenth Century: The China Factor* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2010): 155, 158-161.
[75] Anderson, "Distinguishing Between China and Vietnam," 271-273.
[76] Taylor, *The Birth of Vietnam*, 222.

Jiaozhi' in 993.[77] Bestowing low ranks even in another actor's order threatened ontological security and would be used extensively by the Ming. Prior to invasion, the Yongle Emperor proposed the Hồ and Trần divide authority– with the Trần resuming rule in Đại Việt and the Hồ establishing a new southern polity that would receive Ming investiture but overall undercutting both their positions.[78] Finally, investiture was often reframed as surrender upon a new dynasty coming to power. Emperor Lê Lợi (r. 1428-1433) 'surrendered' following his successful revolt to allow the Ming to save face.[79] Together, these demonstrate how interaction rituals establishing the identity of actors remained a point of tension.

Nature of Interaction Rituals

Successive Đại Việt orders saw their identity shift within the interaction rituals structuring relations with the Ming and Qing at odds with their perceived status. Due to asymmetries in power, Chinese dynasties proved more effective in pressing their understandings which undermined Đại Việt order-building projects. Formal diplomacy consisted of embassies dispatched to China and reception of Chinese envoys within Đại Việt. Known as *Như Thanh Sứ* by the Nguyễn, these missions to and from China generated tensions requiring performance strategies to manage encounters. First, I outline the composition of Đại Việt embassies and reciprocal missions from China, juxtaposing tensions around formal meanings of interaction rituals and subjective understandings. Second, I highlight the mobilisation of embassies and the importance of controlling movement to this process. Third, I demonstrate how ruling dynasties in Đại Việt used official court histories to frame interactions with China in-line with their authority claims and normative agenda.

Composition of Đại Việt embassies reveal the juxtaposition between formal understandings communicated through protocol and the subjective understandings of actors. Đại Việt sent embassies on formal occasions including New Years, the Winter Solstice, and the emperor's birthday. A combination of the low status bestowed on Đại Việt and extended conflict between rival polities saw embassies dispatched sporadically. Requests for investiture were more frequent, with Đại Việt receiving investiture on twelve occasions between 1540 and 1792. Indeed, the number of embassies requesting investiture was greater than times it was bestowed. The Nguyễn sought investiture in 1802, 1820, 1841, and 1848

[77] Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World 589-1276* (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 18-19.
[78] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 64.
[79] Baldanza, *Ming China and Vietnam*, 70.

and received this promptly from the Qing.[80] Đại Việt embassies consisted of a chief and two assistant envoys. Assisting them were three interpreters, physicians, and two alternates. Each was allowed a fixed number of personal servants varying from one to three based on their status.[81] This fixed number departed from Joseon who as discussed earlier saw no restrictions imposed. Formal protocol structuring interaction rituals between Vietnamese and Chinese dynasties remained consistent with East Asia in this period.

Mobilisation saw Đại Việt embassies enter Chinese boundaries and conform to its logic of appropriateness. This control forced Đại Việt to accept any changes to performances and the implications to status this conferred by recognising Ming and Qing authority claims and normative agendas. Prior to dispatching an embassy, communications were sent to the border by the Ministry of Revenue and Imperial Household Department. A delegation consisting of two interpreters, three persons to await orders, and two sets of secretaries, physicians, and inspectors made this request.[82] If successful, a Đại Việt embassy would enter China through the Zhennan Pass bordering Guangxi and Lạng Sơn established by the Jiajing Emperor and used throughout this period.[83] Translated as 'South Suppressing Path', it reflected Chinese beliefs 'Annam' had been pacified and incorporated within its order. Serving as a military outpost, it conveyed the authority of Chinese dynasties to 'hold down' borders and crush rebellions wherein heterodox forces incited actions contradicting appropriate behaviour. Most importantly, it forced Đại Việt to acknowledge Chinese authority in dictating the time and place of their entry.[84] As will be seen, Zhennan Pass was a major site for performances wherein status was conferred on Đại Việt polities within the Ming order.

Routes through China followed precedents to ensure stability in repeating these interaction rituals. During the Nguyễn dynasty, embassies departed Huế before travelling to Bắc Thành (comprising the area around present-day Hanoi), Bắc Ninh, and Lạng Sơn before crossing through Zhennan Pass. Royal elephants accompanied the embassy to the border to

[80] Nguyen Thi My Hanh, "Investiture Beseeching in Vietnam – China Diplomatic Relationship in Feudal Age," *Asian Culture and History* 8, no. 1 (2016): 18-21.
[81] Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 66-68.
[82] Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 59-60.
[83] In 1965, it was renamed 'Friendship Pass' by the People's Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in light of cooperation during the Vietnam War. No longer demarcating their borders, this pass is located well within Chinese territory following a border treaty concluded in 2000.
[84] Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 81-85.

convey the ruler's power and authority.[85] In China, the embassy travelled overland to Ningming Citadel before travelling the Ningming River to Cangwu.[86] From here two alternate river routes existed. The first followed the Gui River to Guilin before travelling through Hunan Province until reaching Wuchang in Huibei Province whereupon they travelled to Beijing by land. Conversely, the second route followed the Xi River east into Guangdong Province and travelling through Jiangxi and Zhejiang Province to Hangzhou whereupon they travelled the Grand Canal to Beijing. Expediency dictated the chosen route as banditry represented a recurring threat to embassies.[87] Shared culture allowed Chinese dynasties to impress upon Đại Việt their claims to be the central civilization. Visits to important Neo-Confucian sites such as Yellow Crane Tower and Yueyang Tower wherein Fan Zhongyan compiled the Neo-Confucian canon further allowed them to assert cultural superiority through association.[88]

Within the capital, interaction rituals imposed an identity on Đại Việt in-line with both the Ming and Qing order. Investiture's importance to stabilising relations saw it willing to follow the performance demanded by Chinese orders. Formal notifications of the death of Đại Việt's ruler and requests for the investiture of his successor by envoys identifies their highly choreographed nature.[89] Only in clothing did Đại Việt exercise a modicum of autonomy. Đại Việt polities accepted Ming standards to be appropriate in determining correct clothing. Nevertheless, Đại Việt polities would change these to serve the needs of their order. For example, Tây Sơn's efforts to secure recognition saw the domestically unpopular decision to wear Qing clothing. In 1790, the Đại Việt embassy ingratiated themselves by wearing Qing clothes despite protocol requiring foreign envoys adhere to their 'traditional' attire. This was popular with the Qing who looked favourably on this act and granted investiture. Nevertheless, domestic rivals criticised the act of wearing 'barbarian' clothing as debasing. Đại Việt polities proved amenable to performance within successive Chinese orders despite contradicting their own efforts to stabilise their relationship.

In contrast, dynasties ruling China did not send envoys as frequently to Đại Việt. Composition remained broadly consistent as interaction rituals favoured Ming and Qing understandings. During the Mạc, Lê, and Tây Sơn dynasties amounting to over two-and-a-

[85] Nguyen, "Investiture Beseeching in Vietnam," 21; Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 68.
[86] Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 107-110.
[87] Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 135
[88] Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 127-128.
[89] Nguyen, "Investiture Beseeching in Vietnam," 18.

half centuries, Đại Việt only received six investiture envoys.[90] This rarity did not necessarily represent a diplomatic sleight as investiture was often communicated through returning embassies. Under the Nguyễn, Qing envoys were received on four occasions. While Huế served as the Nguyễn capital, it only received Qing envoys in 1849. Thăng Long, a citadel established by the Lý dynasty in 1011 received the others. Comparatively higher engagement by the Qing reflects their desire to receive foreign embassies and demonstrate their ability to compel such performances before their Han Chinese elite. Missions south consisted of two Chief Envoys to lead delegations, one of which conferred the title of 'king' on the Vietnamese ruler while the other offered a sacrifice for the deceased 'king'. A document conferring this status was given and in the case of a new dynasty, conferred a golden seal symbolising the power of China.[91]

The mobilisation of Ming and Qing missions inside Đại Việt's boundaries sought to prevent destabilisation. Any changes to interaction rituals were subtle to maintain their relationship. This is best seen in the final Chinese mission to Đại Việt in 1849. Travelling through Zhennan Pass, they crossed overland to Bắc Thành. From here, they travelled to Huế along the Red River Delta through Nam Định, Thanh Hóa, Hồ Xá in Quảng Trị Province before taking the Hương Giang (Perfume River) ferry to Huế.[92] Escorting this mission was a public affair, with the Nguyễn displaying their power to both Qing envoys and their own population. A delegation consisting of three officials, ten musicians, thirty male elephants, and 3500 officials and soldiers accompanied the Qing envoys. They mobilised the population in constructing roads, bridges, and halt stations to accommodate this procession, while the public indirectly participated by displaying flowers at gates and sticking red paper which read 'respectfully welcome' in Chinese.[93] Consequently, while interaction rituals formally confirmed Nguyễn submission by receiving investiture, the magnitude of their escorts conveyed the extent of their authority inside their domain.

Huế served as an inert venue for Nguyễn rulers to express their authority claims and normative agenda even while juxtaposed against interaction rituals designed for receiving investiture. While Zhennan Pass and Thăng Long had been sites where investiture in the Ming and Qing order occurred, performances in Huế instead saw the intersection of their

[90] Nguyen, "Investiture Beseeching in Vietnam," 20-21.
[91] Nguyen, "Investiture Beseeching in Vietnam," 18.
[92] Nguyen, "Investiture Beseeching in Vietnam," 21.
[93] Nguyen, "Investiture Beseeching in Vietnam," 23-25.

competing order-building projects. Here, Emperor Tự Đức (r. 1847-1883), his princes, and court officials came before the Guest House the Qing envoys resided in and kowtowed before the documents before returning to their palace. Following this, Qing envoys journeyed to the palace and stopped before an incense table flanked by two others. Placing the gifts on the middle table, Tự Đức kneeled three times and then kowtowed nine time as the investiture title was read out before the Qing envoys departed.[94] Although accepting investiture on Chinese terms, Đại Việt accounts stress alterations to interaction rituals that conveyed equality. Records identify rulers throughout its history refusing to kowtow to envoys receiving edicts from their northern counterparts. Furthermore, reception of these envoys forewent sitting along a north-south axis conveying their subordination but instead situated themselves on an East-West axis asserting equality.[95] It is unlikely Đại Việt polities were able to alter interaction rituals to reflect their understandings. Nevertheless, their desire to record this in their accounts demonstrates a commitment to situating their order as equal.

Presentation allowed Đại Việt to reconceptualise their relationship with Chinese dynasties at odds with their performances within interaction rituals. Depictions of the Qing within official records hold them in contempt much like other East Asian actors, contrasting the 'barbarian' dynasty against themselves as the remaining successor of classical civilization like Joseon Korea and the Tokugawa bakufu.[96] This is seen in the aforementioned decision of the Lê to ban Manchu clothing. Nguyễn accounts recorded in the *Sự Trình nhật ký* ('Daily Chronicles of the Progress of the Embassy') parallel Joseon's travel diaries by providing the main reference for encounters with China. Although the basis for institutional borrowing initially, the Nguyễn used these to promote scepticism towards Qing claims of superiority. Indeed, ""Decedent China and orthodox Vietnam" was a favourite theme of Minh-mạng's reign."[97] Reports claimed the Qing court communicated in Manchu rather than Chinese and its officials' all smoked opium. Accuracy was less important than communicating the Qing to be in terminal decline in contrast to Đại Việt who maintained Confucian propriety.[98] Furthermore, the *Đại Nam thực lục* ('Veritable Records of the Great South') records Minh Mạng criticising Qing clothing and criticising the Qianlong Emperor's poetry brought back

[94] Nguyen, "Investiture Beseeching in Vietnam," 23-24.
[95] Alexander L. Vuving, "Operated by World Views and Interfaced by World Orders: Traditional and Modern Sino-Vietnamese Relations," Chap. 3 in *Negotiating Asymmetry: China's Place in Asia*, eds. Anthony Reid and Zhang Yangwen (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 81-82.
[96] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 18.
[97] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 121.
[98] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 116-123.

through embassies as vulgar in only depicting "beautiful landscapes" and failing to use "refined poetic language."[99] Even nominally pro-Qing accounts such as Nguyễn Huy Túc's late eighteenth-century poem 'Pleased that the Qing Troops Have Crossed the Border and Are Coming to Our Assistance' reflect the attitudes of a Lê partisan celebrating an ultimately failed effort to put down the Tây Sơn rebellion rather than genuine admiration of the Qing.[100] Indeed, it captures the complexity of Sino-Vietnamese relations in this period. Rather than simplistic narratives of genuine admiration or recurring conflict with China, different Vietnamese actors engaged and resisted at different times. Presentations of ruling dynasties in China in Đại Việt order-building projects shifted with the demands of their context.[101] Circulation of these accounts allowed for the relationship with dynasties ruling China to reflect the claims of Đại Việt orders even if interaction rituals communicated the opposite.

Performance Strategies

Performance strategies provided Đại Việt polities a means to assert a degree of control over interaction rituals. Nevertheless, asymmetry in capabilities allowed the Ming and Qing to simultaneously press their understandings through these strategies at the expense of Đại Việt orders. Whether benign or malign, Đại Việt polities used these to preserve a distinct space following their logic of appropriateness. Contradicting performances within Chinese orders, they proved necessary to manage relations. Role-distancing remained important as they struggled to not participate within interaction rituals challenging their own efforts to construct order. It allowed them to maintain their own authority claims and normative agendas by hiding conflicting efforts from public acknowledgement.

Confrontation

Confrontation represented open efforts to force compliance with Chinese understandings and undermine Đại Việt orders. While not impacting autonomy, it undermined ontological security. This is best demonstrated over the course of the Lê-Mạc War wherein Ming investiture did not legitimise but instead undermined attempts to construct order. Emperor Mạc Đăng Dung (r. 1527-1541) overthrew the Lê in 1527, justifying this on

[99] *Dai Nam thuc luc chinh bien* vol. 2, 159: 2b (Tokyo: Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, Keio University, 1961-1981) Cited in Yu, "Vietnam-China Relations in the 19th Century," 106.
[100] Le Quynh, *Bac hanh tung ky* [Collected jottings from a journey to the North], (late eighteenth/early nineteenth century): A. 403, 42b, Cited in Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 20.
[101] Jaymin Kim, "The Rise and Fall of a Qing-Lê Alliance, 1788–1804: A Case Study on the Praxis of Sino-Vietnamese Relations," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 18, no. 3 (2023): 98-133.

the grounds of his predecessors' impropriety.[102] Nevertheless, establishing the Mạc dynasty (1527-1677) challenged the Ming's prerogative to establish rulers in foreign kingdoms, recognising the exiled prince Lê Ninh as 'Annam's' king instead. The *Mingshi* records the mobilisation of 120,000 soldiers and issuing a bounty of 20,000 gold pieces to 'terrify' Mạc into surrendering.[103] Despite requests to be invested as 'king', the Mạc 'surrendered' at Zhennan Pass in 1540 wherein

> Mac Dang Dung, his nephew, [nine ministers], and others went through Zhennan Pass [into China]. Each was bound with ropes around their necks. They went towards the pavilion of the Ming and prostrated themselves barefoot. They kneeled with bare heads to present their petition of surrender, gave a full account of the country's land, soldiers, people, and officials, and then awaited punishment. They gave the Ming several border villages, because they were willing to belong [to the Ming] and again be subordinate to Qinzhou [a Ming administrative seat]. Mac Dang Dung even asked to receive the calendar and a seal, and carefully held on to them until they could be updated.[104]

The Ming accepted surrender in a large military tent housing a raised dais alongside a dragon arch covered in a yellow banner. Soldiers stood at attention and officials from Guangdong and Guangxi were arranged in two rows according to rank. In hyperbolic fashion, Ming records note tens of thousands of 'Yi' people across the border 'vigorously' bowed and knocked their heads on the ground in submission.[105] This performance delegitimised the Mạc and would be used by the Lê to depict them as cowardly usurpers upon returning to power in 1597.[106]

The formal meanings of interaction rituals challenged the ontological security of both the Mạc and Lê. As discussed, rather than investiture as 'King of Annam', the Ming conferred lower ranks denying Đại Việt's status as an independent kingdom. These surrender ceremonies recognised 'Annam' as a dutongshi reminiscent of the historical Jiaozhi

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[102] John K. Whitmore, "Mac Dang-dung," in *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1368-1644, ed. L. Carrington Goodrich (New York: Colombia University Press, 1976): 1029-1032; John K. Whitmore, "Chung-hsing and Cheng t'ung in Texts of and on Sixteenth-Century Viet Nam," in *Essays into Vietnamese Pasts*, eds. Keith W. Taylor and John K. Whitmore (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995): 122-123.
[103] Baldanza, "Perspectives on the 1540 Mac Surrender," 116-117.
[104] *Daietsu shiki zensho*, ed. Chen Jinghe (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Toyo bunka kenkyujo fuzoku Toyogaku bunken senta, 1984): 847, Quoted in Kathlene Baldanza, "Perspectives on the 1540 Mac Surrender to the Ming," *Asia Major* 27, no. 2 (2014): 115-116.
[105] Baldanza, "Perspectives on the 1540 Mac Surrender," 131-132.
[106] Baldanza, "Perspectives on the 1540 Mac Surrender," 117, 132-140.

Commandery. Mạc Đăng Dung was invested as 'Pacification Commander' recognising him as an official within the Ming bureaucracy and not a dynastical founder.[107] This was mitigated by Mạc's prior abdication and establishment as *Thái thượng hoàng* ('Ruler Emeritus'), thereby allowing him to invest his son as emperor independent of the Ming.[108] Later when the Lê returned to power, the Ming would not invest Emperor Lê Thế Tông (r. 1573-1599) as king but rather 'Pacification Commander'.[109] He also 'surrendered' at Zhennan Pass and presented a gold statue highlighting his submission.[110] Compounding this was the Ming's decision to maintain the Mạc in an equivalent position in Cao Bằng Province at odds with Lê efforts to construct order. Only the Qing restored Đại Việt's rulers to kings.[111] Conversely, Đại Việt confronted their Chinese counterparts in particular circumstances to revise their status. For example, the Nguyễn challenged the performance of an interaction ritual. In 1831, the envoy Lý Văn Phức protested 'Annam's' characterisation as *di* ('barbarian') and insisted their country was a *Văn Hiến Chi Bang*.[112] Later in 1840, envoys of 'Cao Li' (Joseon), 'Nan Zhang' (Laos), Siam, and 'Liu Qiu' (Ryukyu) were ranked higher than Đại Việt in the Qing order. Begrudgingly accepting Joseon's superior position, Minh Mạng was angered by these 'barbarian' kingdoms higher rank as Đại Việt was China's equal. Indeed, the fact Laotian kingdoms had been historical tributaries further undercut Đại Việt's perceived status.[113] This recurrence of confrontation on both sides reinforces the mutual exclusivity of their order claims.

Accommodation

Accommodation between Đại Việt and Chinese order-building projects represented a willingness to play down tensions. While Đại Việt engaged in accommodation by accepting the logic of appropriateness established by Ming and Qing interaction rituals, only in matters of expediency did Chinese dynasties tolerate competing order-building projects. This situation emerged in periods of relative strength for Đại Việt or alternatively those of Chinese

[107] Baldanza, "Perspectives on the 1540 Mac Surrender," 116-117.
[108] James. A. Anderson, "The Ming Invasion of Vietnam, 1407-1427," Chap. 6 in *East Asia in the World: Twelve Events that Shaped the Modern International Order*, eds. Stephan Haggard and David C. Kang (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020): 105-106.
[109] Baldanza, *China and Vietnam*, 80.
[110] Baldanza, *China and Vietnam*, 175-177.
[111] Baldanza, *China and Vietnam*, 204-209.
[112] Vu Duc Liem, "Vietnam at the Khmer Frontier: Boundary Politics, 1802-1847," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 20 (2016): 78.
[113] Yu, "Vietnam-China Relations in the 19th Century," 93.

weakness.[114] For example, the Ming better accommodated the ontological security of the Lê only with the rise of the Qing. In 1646 the remnant Southern Ming finally invested the Lê as 'King of Annam' to solidify their support. Furthermore, in 1651 they afforded Trịnh Tráng as Đại Việt's de-facto ruler the title 'Assistant King of Annam'. The willingness to bestow such ranks on not just formal rulers but other powerful figures demonstrates a sharp departure from earlier relations considering their precarious situation.[115] Compared to the Ming, the Qing proved far more accommodative even at the zenith of their power. This can be seen in the resolution of a territorial dispute with the Lê in the eighteenth-century. From 1725-1728, the Lê exploited the chaos along the periphery with Yunnan and seized control over an area sixty-four kilometres into Qing territory. Difficulty in holding this area and an unwillingness to resort to conflict saw the Qing concede this territory to accommodate the Lê. In return, Đại Việt dispatched an embassy to express gratitude.[116] In light of inherent tensions between both order-building projects, accommodation represented the most prudent management strategy.

Manipulation

Manipulation allowed Đại Việt polities to reposition themselves within interaction rituals established by dynasties in China. An inability to revise formal meanings of interaction rituals saw Đại Việt participate out of expediency despite challenges to its ontological security. Therefore, actions on the part of Đại Việt altered or downplayed their meanings. An example of manipulation can be seen in the brief relationship between Tây Sơn and the Qing. Sponsoring piracy in Guangdong and Fujian alongside Triad activities in Guangxi, Qing intervention in 1788 and threats of annexation forced Tây Sơn to stabilise relations through investiture.[117] Nevertheless, they used this interaction ritual as cover to maintain pressure on Qing efforts to maintain order over the periphery. Claiming sovereignty over Guangdong, Guangxi, and Yunnan, Tây Sơn incorporated Chinese pirates within their order and invested them with ranks in 1792 and commissioned 40 junks to raid China's

[114] Anderson, "Distinguishing Between China and Vietnam," 274-276.
[115] Baldanza, *China and Vietnam*, 195-196.
[116] John E. Wills, "Great Qing and Its Southern Neighbors, 1760-1820: Secular Trends and Recovery from Crisis" (Paper presented at "Interactions: Regional Studies, Global Processes, and Historical Analysis," Library of Congress, February 28 through March 3 2001), http://webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/ebook/p/2005/history_cooperative/www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/interactions/wills.html
[117] Wensheng Wang, *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014): 214-215.

coastline.[118] Manipulation is further seen in the visit of 'Emperor Quang Trung' (r. 1788-1792) to Chengde for the Qianlong Emperor's eightieth birthday which formed part of this project's opening anecdote. Unknown or overlooked by the Qing is that Tây Sơn dispatched a body double of Quang Trung. The *Đại Nam thực lục* records

> Nguyễn Quang Bình [Quang Trung] made Phạm Công Trị assume his name in order to [go to China] because Pham physically resembled himself. He also ordered Ngô Văn Sở, Phan Huy Ích and others to accompany him. The Qing emperor was ashamed of his defeat so that he pretended to accept [the Annamese mission] and grant a large number of awards.[119]

This deceit was necessary as Quang Trung would have been the first Đại Việt ruler to travel north which threatened the legitimacy of his authority. Thus, Tây Sơn engaged in role-distancing from this performance through manipulation.[120] Indeed, this case of manipulation is symptomatic of broader efforts by Đại Việt polities to use interaction rituals not to legitimise their position, but rather to pursue their order-building project elsewhere.

Avoidance

Avoidance reduced the possibilities of contradictions between order-building projects coming to light on a day-to-day basis by limiting the interaction capacity between them. This allowed for Đại Việt polities to prevent their authority claims and normative agendas from being openly acknowledged by their Chinese counterparts. Indeed

> The monarchy of the Nguyen "Sons of Heaven" could maintain its theocentric pose in its own theatre of activities only in conditions of relative isolation from China. Had the Kwangsi judicial commissioner, or some other Ch'ing envoy visited Hanoi frequently for inter-state ceremonies, instead of descending upon the Vietnamese once a reign, he would have become a rival rather than a guest… he would have been a rival in the sense of challenging the Vietnamese ruler's uniqueness as a teacher-ruler in his own carefully selected milieu.[121]

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[118] Ku Boon Dar, "Sino-Vietnamese Relations, 1771-1802: From Contention to Faithful Correlation," *Sejarah: Journal of the Department of History* 24, no. 1 (2017).
[119] *Danan shilu Qing Yue guanxi shiliao huibian*, eds. Xu Wentang and Xie Qiyi (Taipei: Zhongyanyuan Dongnanya quyu jihua, 2000): 32, Quoted in Ge, "Costume, Ceremonial, and the East Asian Order," 144.
[120] Kelley, *Beyond the Bronze Pillars*, 179-180.
[121] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 242.

Preventing the Qing from gaining accurate knowledge of Đại Việt's internal affairs proved desirable to facilitate avoidance. The structure of the Nguyễn-Qing relationship proved effective in limiting contact to formalised interaction rituals and trade to facilitate segmentation. This lack of knowledge is best demonstrated during the First Opium War (1839-1842) wherein a false rumour found its way into the Qing court claiming Đại Việt had overwhelmingly defeated the British in 1808. This resulted in discussions over enlisting Đại Việt's navy, with the Qing only realising later no war had occurred between the two.[122] The Qing's struggle to determine whether conflict had erupted between Britain and a neighbouring kingdom on its border highlights the viability of avoidance.

Through avoidance, Đại Việt maintained interaction rituals contradicting their performances in Chinese orders that endured by not being openly acknowledged. Like Joseon, Đại Việt repositioned Neo-Confucianism and drew upon its historical context to establish a normative agenda legitimising its authority independently. The Nguyễn established Huế as their capital to serve as a microcosm of their order. As Qing envoys only visited Huế once, the Nguyễn were able to emulate the design of the Chinese capital. Starting construction in 1802, it was completed under Minh Mạng in 1820.[123] Here, the Forbidden City at Huế's centre faced southwards in-line with Confucian beliefs on the position of sages. Entry occurred through the Zenith Gate where the sun upon reaching its highest point saluted the emperor as the Son of Heaven within his order. Proceeding northward as supplicants, visitors entered the Hall of Supreme Harmony to acknowledge the Nguyễn emperors.[124] Furthermore, Huế's construction conveyed the historical pedigree of Đại Việt. In 1835, Minh Mạng cast nine large bronze urns emulating the Xia, Shang, and Zhou to display their belief Đại Việt descended from the same classical civilization as China. Imperial Mausoleums demonstrated Nguyễn longevity while the Đàn Nam Giao served as an altar whereby sacrifices could be conducted in-line with the Nguyễn emperor's claim he was the Son of Heaven.[125] Each of these features usurped a prerogative of Chinese dynasties. Likewise, the Nguyễn emphasised their authority resided in their historical rule over Đàng Trong which had

[122] Yu, "Vietnam-China Relations in the 19th Century," 104-105.
[123] Vinh An Le and Ngoc Quynh Chau Truong, "Practicing on the re-construction study of "Can Chanh Dien" Palace, Hue Imperial City, Vietnam—world cultural heritage," *International Journal of Architectural Heritage* 14, no. 9 (2020): 1412-1413.
[124] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 126-129.
[125] Le and Truong, "Practicing on the re-construction study of "Can Chanh Dien"," 1413.

no significant relationship to China.[126] As such, the Thế Tổ Miếu was the Nguyễn ancestral temple situated to the left of the Hall of Supreme Harmony allowing for authority to be legitimised without investiture.[127] This did not result in greater tensions with the Qing because of avoidance.

Relations with Cambodia

Đại Việt's engagement with Cambodia reflects wider attitudes it held towards Southeast Asia. Through the continued use of force, Đại Việt forced the authority claims and normative agenda of their order-building project on Cambodia. Expansion southwards not only allowed Đại Việt to impose interaction rituals constructing Cambodia's identity but eliminated their ability to engage in spatial organisation. Nevertheless, ongoing conflict with Siam over Cambodia limited their ability to impose interaction rituals consistently across this period. This section proceeds as follows. First, I establish the context of Đại Việt's relationship with Cambodia in the wider context of the *Nam tiến*. Incorporating Cambodia was not just dictating when, where, and how interaction rituals took place but also direct interference into socio-political life as a result of annexing territory. Second, I outline the nature of interaction rituals and how embassy missions were composed, mobilised, and presented. Once again, the use of force sought to prevent Cambodia from deviating from formal meanings of the interaction rituals imposed on them. Third, I show how performance strategies reflected wider contestation within interaction rituals. Despite using force, the ability for the Đại Việt order to exert direct control fluctuated meaning performance strategies remained necessary.

Context

Throughout the early modern period, the Nguyễn were the primary Vietnamese actor encountering Cambodia whether as rulers of Đàng Trong or a unified Đại Việt. For most of the early modern period, the Nguyễn ruled at parity if not outright advantage with Cambodia. Interaction rituals aligned with their authority claims and normative agendas. Tensions existed between their Neo-Confucian and Theravada Buddhist worldviews which formed the basis for legitimate authority and the interaction rituals structuring relationships throughout

[126] Ton That Quynh Du, "Hue Re-examined: History, Memory, Heritage," PhD Diss., (Australian National University, 2014): 37.
[127] Ton That, "Hue Re-examined," 166-170.

their societies. These encounters reveal the chauvinism of Đại Việt towards their 'barbarian' neighbours which saw a "highly aggressive Vietnamese cultural self-definition, directed against the very different cultural backgrounds of Siam, Burma, Cambodia, and Laos."[128] Furthermore, Đại Việt's southward expansion placed Cambodia under far greater control as it annexed significant amounts of its territory. While the *Nam tiến* narrative portrays expansion as the occupation of sparsely populated territory, it overlooks the fact these lands were heavily settled meaning Vietnamese colonisation dislocated established populations from their existing ways of life.[129] As such, the Nguyễn shifted between homogenisation and heterogenisation when positioning Cambodia within their order.

A perceived superiority marked Đại Việt's attitude towards Cambodia. The importance of Neo-Confucianism to successive Đại Việt orders left ruling dynasties with low opinions of Cambodian monarchs who relied upon Theravada Buddhism to legitimise their position. While Đại Việt was not a stranger to Buddhist kingship, with the Lý and Trần employing these to legitimise their orders, the socialisation of the central elite into a Neo-Confucian worldview produced a chauvinistic attitude wherein

> the Vietnamese emperor and his bureaucracy were compelled to believe that they were the cultural cynosures of a society surrounded by subversive "barbarians" … In a sense, they could see their mission in the world as constituting a continuation of that culture-spreading process in which the Chinese had indulged from the central Asian steppes to the Kwangsi wilderness and which they themselves had later extended south to the Gulf of Siam and now to Cambodia… When it was translated into Vietnamese terms, it often generated expansionist impulses. Force transcended the classical ideal of influence through passive moral rectitude… The Vietnamese court's cultural pretensions were as great as those of its Chinese archetype but less appropriate to its situations.[130]

In relation to Cambodia, the attitudes of Minh Mạng reiterate these attitudes in the aftermath of conquest

> The barbarians [in Cambodia] have become my children now, and you should help them, and teach them our customs… I have heard, for example, that the land is plentiful and

[128] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 236.
[129] Michael Vickery, "'1620', A Cautionary Tale," Chap 8. In *New Perspectives on the History and Historiography of Southeast Asia, Continuing Explorations*, eds. Michael Arthur Aung-Thwin and Kenneth R. Hall (London: Routledge, 2011): 160-161.
[130] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 252-253.

> fertile and that there are plenty of oxen [for ploughing]… but the people have no knowledge of [advanced] agriculture … Now all these shortcomings stem from the laziness of the Cambodians… and my instructions to you are these; teach them to use oxen, teach them to grow more rice, teach them to raise mulberry trees, pigs and ducks… As for language, they should be taught to speak Vietnamese. [Our habits of] dress and table manners must also be followed. If there is any out-dated or barbarous custom that can be simplified, or repressed, then do so.[131]

These attitudes reflect the idea of a 'civilizing mission' allowing Đại Việt to rationalise their conquests as moral actions. Rather than accommodate Cambodian beliefs, their logic of appropriateness imposed the interests of Đại Việt orders.

Đại Việt and Cambodia found themselves embroiled in conflict across the early modern period. Conflict occurred between Cambodia and the Nguyễn ruling Đàng Trong in 1658-1659, 1673-1679, 1682-1688, 1688-1690, 1699-1700, 1705, 1714, 1747, 1753-1755, and 1771-1772. Factionalism within the Cambodian court and Vietnamese colonisation of the Mekong Delta reproduced the conditions for conflict. The Nguyễn intervened to support their candidate for the Cambodian throne, coming into conflict with rival candidates backed by Siam which solidified their rivalry across the years. Territorial expansion at Cambodia's expense was slow but relentless, with a Nguyễn general describing it as "the policy of slowly eating silkworms" ('*chính sách tàm thực*').[132] It was in this period the Cambodian settlement Prey Nokor come under Nguyễn control and took on its more widely known Vietnamese name – Sài Gòn. The Nguyễn unification of Đại Việt in 1802 saw the continuation of these conflicts. Đại Việt fought with Siam over Cambodia and Laos in 1811-1812, 1825-1828, 1831-1834, 1840, and 1841-1845. While they sought to manage the intersection of their orders in Cambodia, competing interests struggled to be reconciled.[133] Indeed, from 1833 to 1847 Cambodia was annexed as Tây Thành Province. While the Cambodian royal family remained, a Vietnamese governor exercised power in Phnom Penh.[134] In dealing with this conquered population, the Nguyễn alternated between heterogenisation and homogenisation. In 1811, Gia Long engaged in segmentation by ordering the military governor at Hà Tiên to

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[131] *Đại Nam thực lục*, vol. 17, 30, Cited in David Chandler, *A History of Cambodia* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2008): 152-153.
[132] Lieberman, *Strange Parallels*, 411; Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2007): 628; Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 247.
[133] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 65-70.
[134] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 250.

separate non-registered Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese and Malays.[135] Conversely, Minh Mạng pursued homogenisation throughout his reign by consolidating ethnic groups within Vietnamese villages, undertaking ethnic cleansing by driving non-Vietnamese minorities from the Mekong Delta, and colonising this territory with Vietnamese convicts. Where possible, this extended into Cambodia itself following its annexation.[136] As will be seen, this level of control reduced the ability for Cambodia to engage in segmentation and employ performance strategies during encounters with Đại Việt.

Nature of Interaction Rituals

While conflict was a central feature of relations between Đại Việt and Cambodia, formal diplomacy remained structured by interaction rituals centred on dispatching and receiving embassies. By the nineteenth century, embassies from Cambodia fell within the category of *như viễn* ('accommodate the distant'). Established retroactively in the 1855 *Khâm định Đại Nam hội điển sự lệ* ('Official Compendium of Institutions and Usages of the Great South'), it classified Cambodia and Southeast Asian countries as subordinates from time immemorial alongside 'savage alien nations' such as France and England. However, with the exception of Cambodia and the Laotian kingdoms, Đại Việt's claims were largely relegated to performances inside their boundaries.[137] Nevertheless, performance strategies maintained Cambodia's status in the Đại Việt order. First, I outline the composition of embassies to and from Cambodia. I demonstrate how Đại Việt controlled the logic of appropriateness and imposed Neo-Confucian protocol on a Buddhist society. Second, I explore how performances reflected Đại Việt understandings at Cambodia's expense. Third, I demonstrate how Đại Việt presented Cambodia within the legal codes defining its identity within their order.

Composition of embassies to Cambodia conveyed subordination to Đại Việt in-line with East Asian diplomatic practices. Despite shared practices around hierarchy and the provision of tribute, Neo-Confucianism carried minimal legitimacy within Cambodian society. It was only following Champa's conquest that sustained interactions could occur as they came to border one another. The symbolism of these embassies was contingent on the international context they occupied. At Đàng Trong, the Nguyễn interacted with Cambodia at parity as their conflict with the Trịnh limited expansion. In 1616, the Nguyễn dispatched an

[135] Choi, *Southern Vietnam under the Reign of Minh Mạng*, 136.
[136] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 250.
[137] Yu, "Vietnam-China Relations in the 19th Century," 109-110.

embassy to marry a Vietnamese princess to the Cambodian crown prince. While treated as betrayal by contemporary Cambodian historiography due to a mistaken belief this accompanied the surrender of territory, this interaction ritual instead saw the Nguyễn offer tribute.[138] Political marriages continued even as conflict between both polities increased. It was only with unification that asymmetry became unambiguous. Initial overtures were cordial as seen in an 1803 embassy wherein Gia Long thanked the Cambodian court for their support during his campaigns and returned a pair of bronze cannons. Nevertheless, by 1805 a ninety-eight-man Đại Việt embassy informed Cambodia of Gia Long's ascension and the resumption of tributary relations between them.[139]

Gifts provided to Cambodia accentuated the tensions between the worldviews of both polities. In 1806 Gia Long emulated the Qing by sending the same gifts they themselves had previously received. Among other items these included golden dragon paper to transcribe imperial decrees and the court costumes Nguyễn envoys wore in the Qing order. Cambodia's socialisation into Southeast Asian diplomatic practices associated with Theravada Buddhism meant these gifts had little meaning. This is best demonstrated through confusion around the seal of investiture Đại Việt bestowed. The Nguyễn had emulated the Qing in producing this seal and bestowing it on Cambodia's king. Upon reception, the court was confused by an unknown animal on it that they termed a 'Chinese lion'. Incorporating motifs highlighting Qing authority over the courts of Central Asia, the Nguyễn had included a camel which was alien to Cambodia's experiences and records.[140] Thus, composition reflected Đại Việt's order and overlooked Cambodia's understandings of appropriateness and its potential symbolism.

Mobilisation of embassies to Cambodia demonstrated the control Đại Việt exercised over interaction rituals. Đại Việt controlled movement within Cambodia's boundaries limiting their ability to undertake segmentation. Defeat of Siam in the 1811 Cambodian rebellion allowed for officials and soldiers to be stationed inside the country undermining the autonomous production of authority.[141] Embassies conducted interaction rituals investing Cambodia's kings which contradicted their subjective understandings of status. King Ang Chan II (r. 1806-1835) bowed before an altar at Oudong bearing a letter of investiture from Gia Long. Facing southwards in-line with Đại Việt's Neo-Confucian logic, Ang Chan

[138] Vickery, "'1620'," 165-166.
[139] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 68.
[140] Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 136.
[141] Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 248-249.

kowtowed and received the letter granting permission to rule and urging him to emulate proper civilization.[142] Furthermore, Ang Chan visited a temple outside Phnom Penh twice a month housing a tablet inscribed with the ruling Nguyễn emperor's name to bow before as an act of submission inside his boundaries. His successor, Queen Ang Mey saw the Governor of An Giang Province travel to Phnom Penh and urge her loyalty. Rather than the Cambodian title of 'Queen', Đại Việt invested Ang Mey (r. 1835-1840) as *Quận chúa* ('princess') lowering her rank. Huế assigned two companies of one hundred soldiers nominally as bodyguards. In practice however they served to prevent her escape. The Cambodian court only resisted Nguyễn requests Ang Mey marry a son of Minh Mạng.[143] Following annexation, interaction rituals saw the Cambodian court take on statuses within Đại Việt's bureaucratic ranking-system and did not align with their subjective understandings and formed a point of tension.[144]

Dispatching Cambodian embassies to Đại Việt reinforced their subordination. Both their composition and mobilisation reflected Đại Việt's interests as Cambodia aligned with a Neo-Confucian logic of appropriateness it did not recognise. Requests for gifts included ivory, vegetable dyes, lacquer, and other 'forest products'.[145] Elephants remained a key item of tribute in Southeast Asian diplomacy in their value as beasts of war alongside their symbolic status.[146] The Lê maintained protocols for the reception of foreign embassies including those from Cambodia. The *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* ('Complete Annals of Đại Việt') from the sixteenth century identifies military escorts ensuring procedure was followed. Contact with the public and palace servants was forbidden to prevent espionage.[147] Under the Nguyễn, Đại Việt only received embassies in Huế every three years and were restricted to ten officials. The Nguyễn often stopped receiving Cambodian embassies in Huế and conducted relevant ceremonies in Sài Gòn before shipping gifts to the capital. Protocol emphasised Cambodian servility vis-à-vis Đại Việt's grandeur. As a point of contrast, Cambodian embassies to Bangkok included upwards of eighty *oknha* (high-ranking officials carrying titles bestowed by the king indicating closeness), minor officials, and slaves who remained

[142] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 85.
[143] Trude Jacobsen, *Lost Goddesses: The Denial of Female Power in Cambodian History* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008): 112.
[144] Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 149.
[145] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 63-64;
[146] Danny Wong Tze Ken, *The Nguyen and Champa during 17th and 18th Century: A Study of Nguyen Foreign Relations* (Paris: International Office of Champa (IOC-Champa): 2007): 146.
[147] 'Receiving Foreign Envoys (Mid-Sixteenth Century),' in *Sources of Vietnamese Tradition*, 143-144.

for several months.[148] Interaction rituals also allowed Đại Việt to save face in relations with Cambodia when their effective control declined. The submission of King Ang Duang (r. 1840-1860) to Emperor Thiệu Trị (r. 1841-1847) in 1847 allowed the Nguyễn to perform their authority over Cambodia despite being defeated by Siam and losing control over Cambodia in 1845. Indeed, Đại Việt released Cambodia's royal family members and its regalia which allowed them to produce their authority autonomously once again.[149]

Presentation of Cambodia within the Đại Việt order is seen within the legal codes accompanying their colonisation of what would become their southern territory. Alternating between homogenisation and heterogenisation, the shifting approach to the identity of Cambodia was nevertheless under the control of Đại Việt as it constructed their order. Based on their Neo-Confucian logic, the Nguyễn categorised the areas of the world as *giáo hóa* (the core or more accurately 'civilized through education'), *phủ biên* (the pacified periphery), and *nhu viễn* ('distant people'). Interacting with each area carried an ideal logic, with the core assimilated into the dominant culture to be civilized, whereas the periphery and distant people were kept separate either through force or by accommodating their requirements.[150] Cambodia's limited capability for engaging in segmentation meant these controls on their presentation extended into the country itself. As has been discussed earlier and will be detailed further below, edicts on how the non-Vietnamese population of the south should be treated reinforced their perceived lower status. With the annexation of Cambodia, these laws and edicts entrenched themselves further throughout Đại Việt's order. Irrespective of whether homogenisation or heterogenisation guided the actions of Đại Việt, Cambodia had little control over not only their identity, but the low status afforded in their order.

Performance Strategies

Đại Việt utilised performance strategies to ensure interaction rituals with Cambodia recognised their authority claims and normative agenda. More so than the other relationships discussed throughout this project, wider rivalries between Đại Việt and Siam saw force used to resolve conflicts around Cambodia's incorporation into their respective order-building projects. Indeed, the intersection of their orders in Cambodia meant that performance strategies were often used to manage relations with Siam as much as dictate how Cambodia

[148] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 62-64.
[149] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 179-183.
[150] Vu, "Vietnam at the Khmer Frontier," 75-78.

conducted itself within interaction rituals. Thus, while control over movement allowed Đại Việt to dictate the interaction rituals structuring relations with Cambodia, the recurrence of conflict could swiftly undermine these efforts. Segmentation as a result was undertaken in fits and starts in relation to these changes. Likewise, the effectiveness of performance strategies varied considerably, leaving the relationship between both actors far more volatile.

Confrontation

Confrontation saw Đại Việt openly prevent Cambodia from undertaking their own order-building project and legitimise their authority independent of reference to the Nguyễn emperor. While Đại Việt had always dictated the interaction rituals between them, the brief period of annexation demonstrates the extent of these efforts. Here, the Nguyễn imposed their civilizational standards upon Cambodia and through the established laws we see presented the belief Cambodia was a 'barbarian' society. Although the Cambodian monarchy had been retained, its ability to form an alternative basis for power was actively curtailed. Limitations on access between the ruler and the Cambodian elite made it difficult for their positions to be legitimised within their sociocultural context.[151] Despite its practicality, Minh Mạng forbade the expediency of Vietnamese officials communicating in Khmer with Cambodian officials as supporting poor customs.[152] Buddhism was marginalised in favour of the Neo-Confucian beliefs of the Đại Việt order. Temples were marginalised as socio-political centres of gravity and monks were barred from the education process in favour of Confucian scholars. Furthermore, the Nguyễn imposed their understanding of Buddhism on Cambodia, banning practices associated with Theravada in place of the Mahayana beliefs their society tolerated. This is symbolised by efforts to replace orange surplices with the brown robes of Vietnamese monks.[153] Finally, sumptuary laws were targeted at wider Cambodian society as Đại Việt carried out its Confucian 'civilizing mission'. Women were required to grow their hair long in Vietnamese styles and wear trousers rather than traditional skirts. Changes to the culinary habits of the Cambodian people were enforced through the requirement markets sell Vietnamese rather than Cambodian food.[154] Through conquest, Đại Việt engaged in acts of confrontation eliminating the potential for alternative interaction rituals.

[151] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 129-130.
[152] Choi, *Southern Vietnam under the Reign of Minh Mạng*, 136-138.
[153] Choi, *Southern Vietnam under the Reign of Minh Mạng*, 138.
[154] Jacobsen, *Lost Goddesses*, 112-113.

At the same time, Cambodia resisted the authority claims and normative agenda of the Đại Việt order using force. In driving their influence out of their country, they sought to eliminate the interaction rituals structuring their relationship. Rebellions following annexation not only resisted Vietnamese control but sought to construct autonomous bases of authority at odds with the imposed Neo-Confucian logic. The Neak Sel or Holy Man's rebellion in 1820 best demonstrates this, combining anti-Vietnamese attitudes with a prominent role for Buddhism as a legitimising force. A monk named Kai was able to mobilise Cambodian labourers conscripted to work on the Vĩnh Tế Canal in revolt, seizing three provinces before declaring himself king. The inability of the Vietnamese governor to put this down followed by his capture and likely execution resulted in support from members of the Cambodian elite. Kai's authority rested on Buddhism, with the cure and amulets held by his followers symbolising his authority and understood as appropriate within their Theravada Buddhist milieu.[155] Furthermore, from 1841 to 1845 as Đại Việt fought against Siam over Cambodia, insurrections adopted similar approaches in using Buddhism to construct a basis for authority challenging Đại Việt's order.[156] Cambodian resistance is comparable to the difficulties the Lê faced in the sixteenth century in enforcing their logic of appropriateness over the countryside which resulted in the Trần Cao rebellion. Following the withdrawal of Đại Việt forces and resumption of tributary relations in 1847, physical acts such as the levelling of Vietnamese fortifications in Phnom Penh and construction of Buddhist temples in their place were symbolic acts of confrontation enhancing the legitimacy of the new king.[157] By imposing interaction rituals on Cambodia at odds with their understandings the resulting tension culminated in acts of confrontation that culminated in the use of force.

Accommodation

Accommodation saw actors manage the intersection of their respective order-building projects to mitigate tensions between them. While the frequency of conflict suggests this was not particularly successful, it does highlight their use in managing the intersection of orders remained a perennial issue across this period. Prior to the nineteenth-century, the Cambodians sought to accommodate Vietnamese colonisation of the Mekong Delta. For example, the Nguyễn colonies at Mô Xoài and Đồng Nai sought Cambodian recognition as these were

[155] David Chandler, 'An Anti-Vietnamese Rebellion in Early Nineteenth Century Cambodia: Pre-Colonial Imperialism and a Pre-Nationalist Response," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 6, no. 1 (1975): 16-22.
[156] Choi, *Southern Vietnam under the Reign of Minh Mạng*, 129-130.
[157] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 179-186.

established within their territory prior to their incorporation into Đàng Trong. King Barom Rechea V recognised these as having equal status in his territory and later allowed Đàng Trong officials to establish census records of inhabitants, villages, and land allotments.[158] These concessions often occurred in the face of political realities – Cambodia could not militarily resist and acts of accommodation limited tensions around intersection. While effective in the short-term, they did not resolve issues of expansionism. Furthermore, accommodation was employed by both Đại Việt and Siam as their interests in Cambodia intersected. Rather than overlook the reality that both hierarchies incorporated Cambodia as seen elsewhere in this project, their rulers openly acknowledged Cambodia's dual-tributary status in communications with one another. Indeed, Gia Long stated

> "Cambodia is a small country," the Emperor said. "And we should maintain it as a child. We will be its mother; its father will be Siam. When a child has trouble with its father it can get rid of suffering by embracing its mother. When the child is unhappy with its mother, it can run to its father for support."[159]

Later in 1813, Gia Long remarked that while Cambodia was an independent country, it nevertheless served as "the slave of two".[160] Despite this acknowledgement, the recurrence of conflict throughout the early modern period demonstrates that a desire to accommodate both orders through open acknowledgement did not always translate into effective management.

Manipulation

Manipulation saw Đại Việt appropriate the interaction rituals of Cambodia's order-building project and redirect them towards legitimising their own. Open conflict reduced the necessity of manipulation as a strategy. Nevertheless, the importance of performative submission saw the incorporation of the Jarai people as manipulation altered their available choices to Đại Việt's advantage. Inhabiting present-day Vietnam's Central Highlands and Cambodia's Ratanakiri Province, the Jarai inhabited a liminal position between both their orders. For Cambodia, the Jarai played an important role legitimising their ruler's authority. Known as the 'Kings of Fire and Water' within Cambodian legend, they provided important talismans used in court rituals and saw their rulers acknowledged to hold supernatural

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[158] H.R. Chakrabartty, *Vietnam, Kampuchea, Laos: Bound in Comradeship*, Vol. 2 (New Delhi: Patriot Publishers, 1988): 498-500; Ian Mabbett and David Chandler, *The Khmers* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing, 1995): 227.
[159] Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, 140.
[160] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 85.

power.[161] Cambodian kings sent annual gifts of young male elephants, brass wire, glassware, iron, cotton cloth and silk while the Jarai sent a wax seal bearing his thumbprint and rhinoceros horn among other things.[162] While mutual incorporation existed historically, the Nguyễn detached the Jarai and establish their distinct identity within their order. When ruling Đàng Trong, the Nguyễn incorporated the Jarai and other ethnic minorities into their royal guard. This communicated their suzerainty over these groups symbolically even as effective control did not exist in practice.[163] Annexation and the elimination of the basis for an autonomous Cambodian authority forced the Jarai to interact with Đại Việt. Like the wider Đại Việt order, the status of the Jarai was exaggerated when incorporating their performance. The Jarai resided in the country of 'Nam Ban' at 'Fire Haven' and 'Water Haven'.[164] Yet even Minh Mạng's officials acknowledged this manipulation as the Jarai counties of Thủy Xá and Hỏa Xá appeared to be little more than conglomerations of tribes.[165] By eliminating an alternative Cambodian order and forcing participation in its own, Đại Việt manipulated Jarai participation within their order.

Avoidance

Avoidance was a performance strategy Đại Việt sought to prevent in asserting their order. Indeed, Cambodia employed this strategy to attempt segmentation and maintain an autonomous basis to legitimise its authority and distance itself from the interaction rituals imposed on it that remained alien to its culture. This was possible for most of the early modern period as geography prevented Đại Việt polities from consistently asserting direct control. The Long Xuyên Quadrangle separated these polities, comprising over 489,000 hectares and encompassing the border between these polities, the Gulf of Siam, and the Hậu River. Likewise, a wetland depression known as the Plain of Reeds stretched for 13,000 kilometres, encompassing the Vietnamese provinces of Đồng Tháp and Tiền Giang alongside parts of Svay Reang in Cambodia. These experienced flooding during the wet season, salinization from rising seawater, and drought during the dry season. This formed a hard

[161] Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Sons of the Mountains: Ethnohistory of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1982): 129-130.
[162] Hickey, *Sons of the Mountains*, 136.
[163] Wong Tze Ken, *The Nguyen and Champa during 17th and 18th Century*, 158-160.
[164] For Huế it was difficult to distinguish between Jarai groups. In 1831, tribute from 'Water Haven' was misidentified as coming from 'Fire Haven.' Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model*, 237-238; Wong Tze Ken, *The Nguyen and Champa during 17th and 18th Century*, 156-157; Harold E. Meinheit, "Captain Cupet and the King of Fire: Mapping and Minorities in Vietnam's Central Highlands," *The Portolan* 84 (2012): 10-11.
[165] Choi, *Southern Vietnam under the Reign of Minh Mạng*, 132-133.

barrier to settlement and movement between them.[166] Since control was difficult to achieve, it allowed for avoidance in the form of maintaining its own ritual apparatus that served as the sociocultural centre of their society.

> Inside Cambodia, the king was the ultimate patron, the "wheel-turning monarch", and the "lord of living things". He accepted gifts and subservience, as a matter of course, from the officials he ennobled and the regions he "consumed", but he lacked the power to be a patron of other kings. Subordinating everyone inside his borders, he became a subordinate when he ventured into dealings with Vietnam or Siam.[167]

Furthermore, Cambodia's dual-tributary status saw it attempt to use its existing relationship with Siam to avoid provision of tribute to the Nguyễn. Following Gia Long's requests for tribute, Cambodia dispatched an embassy to Bangkok to inform them, seeking to leverage their relationship to avoid performing in Đại Việt's order. Nevertheless, Siam allowed for their resumption.[168] Ultimately, the geographical barriers provided Cambodia with the ability to engage in avoidance until the nineteenth century. As discussed earlier, it was these practices enabled by avoidance that Đại Việt sought to eliminate through annexation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the Đại Việt order-building projects represented a middle-ground in terms of their success in establishing their own order within East Asia's wider polycentric hierarchy. Rather than consensus around shared Neo-Confucian norms, subjective understandings around the meaning of interaction rituals highlighted fundamental disagreements around status and identity. While successive Đại Việt polities struggled to assert their authority claims and normative agendas against both the Ming and Qing orders, their efforts to incorporate their Southeast Asian neighbours on their terms proved successful. Unlike both Tokugawa Japan and Joseon Korea, force played a major role in establishing a foundation on which successive dynasties ruling in Đại Việt could construct order. Most importantly, it eliminated the possibility of weaker rivals being able to engage in segmentation and instead saw them fall under their direct control even if their polities continued to nominally exist. This successful expansion is remarkable in that for most of this period the area constituting present-day Vietnam saw conflict between competing Đại Việt

[166] Vu, "Vietnam at the Khmer Frontier," 85.
[167] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 61.
[168] Chandler, "Cambodia Before the French," 68.

polities whose efforts to construct order clashed. As a result, while segmentation through control over movement remained a strategy to construct an inside/outside dynamic vis-à-vis dynasties ruling China, their ability to maintain interaction rituals in-line with their vision of order was not always successful. On the inside, Đại Việt's ruler positioned themselves as emperor and maintained interaction rituals that saw foreign actors recognise their authority in practice. Conversely on the outside, a willingness to accept the status of 'king' within Chinese orders was not always achievable as recognition as an independent realm was not always given. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties and the resulting need to compromise, Đại Việt orders remained proactive and ultimately successful in carving a distinct space reflecting their claims.

For successive Đại Việt order-building projects, performance strategies remained important in ensuring formal diplomacy best reflected their subjective understandings and allowed for challenges in these encounters to be addressed. In their relationship with both the Ming and Qing orders, Đại Việt sought to resist the terms of their incorporation to the extent possible. Historical conflicts, while rare by the time of the early modern period, shaped how Đại Việt perceived their northern counterpart and vice versa. Although the historical memory of Chinese invasions remained prominent in the mind of Vietnamese dynasties, actors willingly performed in their successive orders. Here, they proved willing to accept the status of 'king' even as they ruled as 'emperor' of their own order. However, for much of this period, Chinese dynasties invested their Vietnamese counterparts not only with low ranks, but in ways implying 'Annam' was their territory and not an independent country. These actions sought to directly undermine successive orders in Đại Việt. Conversely, Đại Việt's interactions with Southeast Asia as exemplified in its relationship with Cambodia demonstrates the use of warfare as a tool for constructing order. As a result, performance strategies took on a secondary role as force was used by Đại Việt to compel Cambodia to perform within the interaction rituals constituting their order by eliminating the basis for autonomously produced authority. Irrespective of their effectiveness, Đại Việt continued to employ these to manage relations with other actors.

Chapter Six – Breakdown of Polycentric Hierarchy

Having explored the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects, this chapter demonstrates how East Asia's polycentric hierarchy broke down across the early modern period. IR predominantly focuses on identifying the basis for long-term continuity in East Asian order. While producing numerous insights into the nature of hierarchy in historical East Asia and beyond, its breakdown receives comparatively less attention. My project highlights continuity and change in order management. I look at three instances polycentric hierarchy broke down – Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula, the Ming-Qing transition, and the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. I argue polycentric hierarchy broke down when the ambitions of East Asian actors could no longer be managed through segmentation. Here, actors pressed their authority claims and normative agenda using force to revise the system on their terms. This arose from the following circumstances. First, loss of ritual efficacy across repeated performances due to shifts in the historical context inhabited by actors saw prioritisation of subjective understandings over formal meanings. As participation constituted how order was experienced day-to-day these micro-level changes were. Therefore, ambivalence or hostility to increasingly formulaic performances results in a decreasing desire to manage competing order-building projects. Second, with contradictions coming to the fore and no longer hidden, conflict became increasingly likely. With segmentation no longer viable in managing durable inequality peacefully, macro-level pressures throughout the system increased the likelihood of conflict. Together, these instances bolster my project's core argument by showing how the failure of segmentation precedes order breakdown, reiterating its criticality to management.

Furthermore, I account for why polycentric hierarchy continued to reconstitute itself until the nineteenth century. While the triggering event, extent of the disruption, and reconstitution of order following breakdown varied, each instance reinforces spatial organisation's centrality. I attribute differences in outcomes to the capacity of actors to enforce their authority claims and normative agendas following a bid for revision. In the first two instances, East Asia returned to a polycentric hierarchy managed through segmentation. The resulting equilibrium still rested on managing competing order-building projects rather than converging on shared understandings. Toyotomi Hideyoshi's bid for revision, while devastating, failed to conquer East Asia and impose their heterodox *shinkoku* ideology. The Qing bid for revision adapted the Ming order and its method for management. Resistance

throughout East Asia to the Qing superimposing their prerogatives over accepted rituals required force to press their claims. In both instances, contemporaneous technological capabilities could not bridge distances allowing for the exercise of direct control and the elimination of rival orders. Conversely, the arrival of Western actors in the final instance did not mark the end of hierarchy in East Asia, but rather how it was implemented. Western imperialism penetrated deeper into East Asian societies and entrenched hierarchy further through their authority claims. Greater demands on subordinates were justified on civilizational and racial lines which formed the basis of new normative agendas. Most importantly, segmentation was eliminated as a means of managing order by Western actors through the imposition of treaty ports and extraterritoriality alongside converting once autonomous polities into colonies. This removed the inside/outside dynamic on which the region had operated throughout the early modern period.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I outline the loss of ritual efficacy preceding the breakdown of polycentric hierarchy. Having used interaction rituals as a framework, I identify how shifts in the historical context resulted in a decline in enthusiasm for maintaining performances. This is attributed to changes in the social, political, and economic contexts of actors alongside the changing characteristics of actors themselves. As even an inside/outside dynamic became undesirable, segmentation increasingly became unable to manage contradictions. Second, I briefly explore three instances wherein polycentric hierarchy broke down – Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula, the Ming-Qing transition, and the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. I highlight the contextual factors resulting in a loss of ritual efficacy and how this changed the motivation for actors resulting in challenges to East Asia's polycentric hierarchy. Finally, I conclude by comparing these instances to demonstrate how order evolved and reinforce the centrality of segmentation to managing order.

Loss of Ritual Efficacy

My account of polycentric hierarchy's breakdown focuses on the loss of ritual efficacy as actors see enthusiasm for ongoing participation decline. As ritual produces stability by establishing an equilibrium in relationships, its decline leads to fragmentation and instability. Therefore, my account reflects wider questions on the decline of order within IR. Predominant approaches focus on macro-level changes to actors' interests. Concepts such as power transition identify shifts in the balance of power heightening anxieties to the point of

conflict.[1] Similarly, declining adherence to institutional rules regulating conduct also accounts for breakdown.[2] Both are effective in highlighting macro-level pressures disrupting the equilibrium established by order. Together, they identify "the principal cause of the breakdown of orders is the unrestricted pursuit by actors – individuals, factions or political units – of their parochial goals."[3] Yet these 'parochial goals' are not the exception but rather the rule as managing competing interests remains ongoing. It is not competing interests that erode order but rather the social bonds allowing deviations to be managed. Indeed, "power politics and common interests do not speak for themselves"—beyond them, "cognitive, sociological, emotional and other nontangible bonds" create shared narratives rendering these concepts meaningful to actors. Crises threaten order by obscuring the identities actors have been previously socialised into.[4] Here, 'quotidian disruption' "penetrates and disrupts, or threatens to disrupt, taken-for-granted, everyday routines and expectancies" constituting order at the micro-level.[5] Consequently, my focus on interaction rituals is not a departure from these accounts. Rather, I identify how systemic pressures are mitigated or exacerbated by actors whose conflicting experiences in performances at the micro-level increasingly struggle to be managed through segmentation.

The management of order is an ongoing process locatable in the performances of interaction rituals. Polycentric hierarchy is sustained not only through continued performances of order, but in managing tensions arising from how actors experience participation.[6] As I argue throughout this project, tensions exist between the formal meanings and subjective understandings of rituals. Segmentation mitigates this by locating contradictory performances in discreet spaces on an inside/outside dynamic allowing actors to distance themselves from meanings they disagree with. This allows them to maintain an equilibrium stabilising relations and ensuring material security. However, even this dynamic

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[1] A.F.K Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Knopf, 1958)
[2] G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012)
[3] Richard Ned Lebow, "Aristotle and the Breakdown of Order," Chap. 18 in *The Art of World-Making: Nicholas Greenwood Onuf and his Critics*, ed. Harry Gould (London: Routledge, 2017): 237-238.
[4] Janice Bially Mattern, *Ordering International Politics: Identity, Crisis, and Representational Force* (London: Routledge, 2005): 3-9.
[5] David A. Snow, Daniel M. Cress, Liam Downey, and Andrew W. Jones, "Disrupting the "Quotidian": Reconceptualizing the Relationship Between Breakdown and the Emergence of Collective Action," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 3, no. 1 (1998): 2.
[6] Kay Junge, "The promise of performance and the problem of order," Chap. 9 in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, eds. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 308-310.

could become increasingly intolerable to actors in the face of contextual shifts. Thus, accounts highlighting rituals creation of 'collective effervescence' leaving participants emotionally fulfilled and connected underplay the complexity of such interactions in the day-to-day of international life. No performance of a ritual is the same as another. In numerous cases "a weak or failed social ritual lowers the confidence and initiative of participants" as actors simply go through the motions.[7] Here, actors "throw themselves into putting on a show of participating wholeheartedly… By their own motivation they seek to participate and go through the motions. While this can have the same effect for some… it is exhausting for others who lose emotional energy in maintaining this charade."[8] This means its effectiveness for stabilising relations between actors varies over time and place.[9] Since experiences of rituals differ between actors, desire to continue performing differs across time as the challenges facing them are constantly shifting.

While interaction rituals call forth a timeless world, their origin is historically specific to a particular socio-political milieu. Formal meanings represent a consensus acceptable to actors upon their inception within a particular context. However, subjective understandings increase in prominence across time and result in lessened effectiveness. This results from two factors – shifts in historical context and the character of participating actors. First, changes to the social, political, and economic context of actors introduces new pressures actors must respond to. Consequently, interaction rituals may no longer be effective in addressing these. For example, Clifford Geertz's observation of a Javanese funeral held in the village of Modjokuto highlights how rather than resolidifying community bonds, it exacerbated political and religious divides within the village. Here, rituals no longer operated effectively within the rapidly changing context of postcolonial Indonesia.[10] Second, the characteristics of actors also change which alters their attitudes towards interaction rituals. An example of this are the liturgical reforms of Vatican II structuring Catholic Mass. Catherine Bell attributes these changes to "the great shifts in the political, social and institutional status of the church and its members."[11] Here, rituals were adapted to better suit the changed character of participants. Both factors are interrelated and feed into one another. For polycentric hierarchy therefore, while the interaction rituals structuring relations between actors remained

[7] Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, xii-xiii.
[8] Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 53.
[9] Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 40-41.
[10] Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change, a Javanese Example," *American Anthropologist* 59, no. 1 (1957): 32-54.
[11] Catherine Bell, "Ritual, Change, and Changing Rituals," *Worship* 63 (1989): 40.

consistent, their efficacy was impacted by the wider context of their performance as well as the character of participants.

Consequent impacts on the stability of order can be seen in how actors manage contradictions. While tensions between formal meanings and subjective understandings are ever-present, the growing divide highlighted earlier results in actors no longer attempting to manage contradictions through performance strategies. Although segmentation separates contradictory performances, actors find even this dynamic to be increasingly burdensome. As a result, actors find their ontological and material security no longer achieved through ongoing management of polycentric hierarchy. As contexts shift and the efficacy of interaction rituals decline, actors rely increasingly on performance strategies to mitigate threats posed to ontological security. While actors go through the motions considering the stability produced, interaction rituals are divorced from the authority claims and normative agendas of actors within polycentric hierarchy. By the end, actors not only contest the status and identity conveyed in rituals, but the rituals structuring relations themselves. Thus, when the opportunity presents itself, they willingly defect from even nominal commitment and pursue their interests through alternative avenues. This becomes clear when actors no longer believe they can achieve even their material security by going through ritualised motions and engaging in segmentation. They become willing to risk instability and conflict to pursue revisions. Uneven power distribution sees the strongest actors most capable of forcing revisions to re-establish hierarchy on their terms.

Thus, failure is recognisable as the collapse of polycentric hierarchy. Here, the structural configuration of the system no longer manages tensions occurring during ritual performances. Due to inherent contradictions within polycentric hierarchy, it became unviable when actors no longer engaged in segmentation. Since actors played a central role in maintaining this system, understanding their interest in preserving this is vital to explaining its breakdown as these instances often resulted in dynastical collapse. Indeed, while satisfaction of an actor's needs with regards to order and the survival of the system as a whole overlap, these cannot be conflated. Throughout early modern East Asia, ruling dynasties saw survival linked with the successful management of tensions. Existing asymmetries in capabilities meant preserving this system served the interests of actors. Failure is therefore identifiable in the moments when actors no longer saw their survival predicated on maintaining the system due to changing perceptions of rituals. Here, rituals come to a point in which "little or no feeling of group solidarity; no sense of one's identity as

affirmed or changed; no respect for the group's symbols; no heightened emotional energy" is produced.[12] This generates a willingness to discard or rebel against participation. Indeed, IR identifies that in seeking to establish stability, ritual can produce the opposite effect and sow discord.[13] Performances provoke opposite reactions to formal meanings. Attention is turned against symbols, becoming a point of tension directed against other participants.[14] As hierarchy was the outcome of these rituals, disagreements around performances destabilised relationships between actors. In the following section, I explore three instances across the early modern period wherein polycentric hierarchy broke down in East Asia.

Early Modern East Asia and the Breakdown of Order

Rather than treat order as contiguous, this project builds on existing work in IR accounting for change as much as continuity in early modern East Asia. Just as narratives of the Western order mark its evolution in response to crisis events such as the Napoleonic Wars or the First World War, this project seeks to continue efforts that incorporate the same dynamism into East Asian history by exploring how actors in early modern East Asia responded to ongoing order contestation. Between the fall of the Mongol Yuan and the arrival of Western imperialism between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively, two different orders emerge. Dominated by the Ming and Qing respectively, each saw their authority claims and normative agendas incorporate most actors within East Asia inside their own space. While other East Asian actors pursued their own order-building projects simultaneously in their own spaces, these did not have the same extent. Therefore, performance strategies continued to be deployed to manage competing order-building projects and ensure segmentation. The breakdown occurring in each instance represented an inability to manage material and ontological security interests as tensions between formal meanings and subjective understandings of interaction rituals became irreconcilable. Reinforcing these tensions were changing power dynamics which exerted pressures on East Asian actors that both segmentation and performance strategies struggled to mitigate.

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[12] Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 51.

[13] Tanja Aalberts, Xymena Kurowska, Anna Leander, Maria Mälksoo, Charlotte Heath-Kelly, Luisa Lobato, and Ted Svensson, "Rituals of world politics: On (visual) practices disordering things," *Critical Studies on Security* 8, no. 3 (2020): 240-264.

[14] David Boyns and Sarah Luery, "Negative Emotional Energy: A Theory of the "Dark-Side" of Interaction Ritual Chains," *Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2015): 162.

This section explores three instances wherein East Asia's polycentric hierarchy broke down – Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula, the Ming-Qing transition, and the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. I proceed through each instance as follows. First, I outline the historical background wherein a bid for revision by actors precipitated the wider breakdown of polycentric hierarchy. Second, I highlight both the authority claims and normative agenda put forward by the revising actor which could not be accommodated within existing interaction rituals. Third, I demonstrate the resolution of this conflict and how polycentric hierarchy was re-established. This identifies both continuity and change across early modern East Asia. Furthermore, it demonstrates the importance of spatial organisation to managing order across this period.

Hideyoshi's Invasions of the Korean Peninsula

Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula from 1592 to 1598 shows how the shifting context of East Asia struggled to accommodate the ambitions of Japan's rulers. Representing an unambiguous bid for hegemony in East Asia through the creation of a Japanocentric world order, it directly challenged rival order-building projects and ignored the role of segmentation and performance strategies in managing tensions. In Hideyoshi's vision, neither his regime's material nor ontological security could be secured through even the segmentation of space – the existence of competing orders in his mind was intolerable. Thus, in a conflict occurring on a scale unseen in Europe at that time, an expeditionary force of 158,800 Japanese soldiers invaded the peninsula in 1592 as 250,000 soldiers waited in reserve.[15] Escorting the over 700 transport ships needed to carry Hideyoshi's forces across the Korea Strait were 300 warships. On the other side, over 60,000 Korean and near 100,000 Chinese soldiers fought against Hideyoshi's invasion.[16] In identifying Hideyoshi's motivations to instigate such a conflict, historians put forward several explanations that are not mutually exclusive but instead interrelate. These include territorial expansion, opening China to trade, solidifying Hideyoshi's position in Japan by committing the forces of rival daimyō to an external conflict, and personal ambition.[17] Hideyoshi's bid for hegemony

[15] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 104.
[16] As David Kang and Xinru Ma highlight, this dwarfed the contemporaneous Spanish Armada sent to invade England in 1588 in terms of ships and soldiers which only consisted of 197 and 16,000 respectively. Kang and Ma, "Power Transitions," 140; Samuel J. Hawley, *The Imjin War: Japan's Sixteenth-century Invasion of Korea and Attempt to Conquer China* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society – Korea Branch, 2005): 115-116.
[17] Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*, 63; Wolters, 'Ayudhyā," 167; Gang Deng, "The Foreign Staple Trade of China in the Pre-Modern Era," *International History Review* 19, no. 2 (1997): 254; Arano Yasunori, "The Formation of a Japanocentric World Order," *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2, no. 2 (2005): 191;

openly forced his authority claims and normative agenda and highlighted their incompatibility to other rulers.

Although Hideyoshi's motivation for invasion can understood as unwillingness to reconcile his personal ambitions through segmentation, this needs to be situated within the context of Japan's political situation in the sixteenth century. As Ji-Young Lee notes, at the heart of each argument for conflict is Hideyoshi's need to legitimise his status within Japan vis-à-vis rivals.[18] He has often been cast as a megalomaniacal figure whose "unbounded assurance brought Hideyoshi astonishing success" but "also led him into a vainglorious war with Korea."[19] This behaviour was explained as madness brought on by his domestic military success and consequently shaped his legacy in the popular imagination.[20] Writing during the Tokugawa period, Oze Hoan's biography of Hideyoshi, the *Taikōki*, commented that "He spread his violence across the seas with lawless pride. Since he disgraced his high office, divine retribution was very deep."[21] However, obsession with recognition of his authority can be understood considering his personal background. Hideyoshi had arisen from the peasantry and had entered the military through his father who served as an *ashigaru* (peasant foot soldier). With no samurai lineage to draw on as a marker of status, Hideyoshi relied upon the Japanese emperor to legitimise his position.[22] In contrast to the Tokugawa, Hideyoshi took the court titles of *kampaku* ('regent'), *Daijō-daijin* ('Chancellor of the Realm') and later *taikō* ('retired regent') rather than shōgun. This explains the importance of the Japanese emperor within Hideyoshi's normative agenda.[23] Compounding this situation was his need to bolster his position in Japan, leaving his efforts to impose his vision of order on East Asia as much an effort to support his position domestically as personal ambition. Like the Tokugawa, Hideyoshi's foreign conquests were an extension of domestic efforts. Indeed, Hideyoshi left both ally and enemy daimyo with their positions provided they submit to his person.[24] Recognition of his 'supreme authority' was conveyed through conquest as this represented

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Hawley, *The Imjin War* , 22-24, Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982): 216.

[18] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 114-116.

[19] Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 6.

[20] Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 226; Susan Westhafer Furukawa, *The Afterlife of Toyotomi Hideyoshi: Historical Fiction and Popular Culture in Japan* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2022).

[21] Oze Hoan, *Taikō-ki*, ed. Kuwata Tadachika (Tokyo: Shinjimbutsu Ōrai-sha, 1971): 554, Quoted in Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 7.

[22] Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 8.

[23] Ben-Ami Shillony, *Enigma of the Emperors: Sacred Subservience in Japanese History* (Kent: Global Oriental, 2003): 85-86; Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 179.

[24] Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 4-6.

the basis daimyō had been incorporated during unification. Legitimising this authority before rival daimyō relied on mobilising their forces and providing spoils following conquest. It also directed their energies outwards and avoided the potential for them to leverage their forces in opposition to Hideyoshi's rule.[25] Thus, although the distinctiveness of his beliefs clashed with prevailing order in East Asia, the demands of regime survival facilitated Hideyoshi's march to war.

The authority claims of Hideyoshi's order-building project refused to compromise with their East Asian counterparts. Rather than align their ambitions on an inside/outside dynamic through segmentation, Hideyoshi sought to ensure all interaction rituals Japan took part in recognised his vision of order. This sensitivity to contradictory expressions of authority is seen within Japan and beyond. Despite his hegemonic position within Japan, resting his authority claims on marital prowess carried little weight in wider East Asia. As demonstrated in his private correspondence, Hideyoshi expressed a Japanocentric vision of order that brooked no competitors to his authority. In discussions with Portuguese Jesuit Gaspar Coelho, Hideyoshi expressed desire to conquer China, India, Korea, Luzon (the Philippines), Ryukyu, Thailand, and Taiwan.[26] For Japan at the time, this constituted the known world. While the scale of Hideyoshi's ambitions outstripped his actual capabilities, it captures an attitude of a ruler unwilling to compromise on recognition of his authority. Alternatively, Arano Yasunori argues that in spite of this rhetoric, Hideyoshi had "far more realistic foreign policies" and was willing to compromise on specific material goals to secure recognition of his proclaimed status.[27] Irrespective of the extent of these ambitions, the willingness to push their authority claims and employ force to assert this made it difficult for Japan to reconcile with East Asia's polycentric hierarchy. The irreconcilable nature of their authority claims is seen in their interactions with other East Asian rulers prior to invasion. For example, Ryukyu sought to preserve the status quo by avoiding challenging or confirming Hideyoshi's claims. Yet with the outbreak of conflict and the potential threat posed by Japan, Ryukyu acquiesced to demands for providing Japan's war effort with materials even as this contradicted their relationship with the Ming.[28] As polycentric hierarchy presented no

[25] Nakano Hitoshi, "Research Trends on the Japanese Invasion of Korea in 1592 (Imjin War)," *International Journal of Korean History* 18, no. 2 (2013): 32-33; Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 212-213.
[26] O.H.K. Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2004): 167.
[27] Yasunori, "The Formation of a Japanocentric World Order," 206.
[28] Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail,* 52.

effective means to temper the demands of his order-building project Hideyoshi's authority claims did not lend themselves easily to management considering his ambitions.

The normative agenda of Hideyoshi's order-building project legitimised their claims by emphasising *shinkoku* ideology within interaction rituals which clashed with wider East Asian understandings of appropriateness. Emphasis on *shinkoku* ideology reflected Hideyoshi's unique status issues vis-à-vis rival daimyō. Therefore, the normative basis for his authority over the daimyō rested not on his ability to mobilise their forces, although this is how it was exercised in practice, but rather their subordination to the throne.[29] In Hideyoshi's eyes, the myth of the imperial family's unbroken line of divine descent proved their superiority. Conversely, for East Asia the centrality of the imperial family to Hideyoshi's normative agenda, while intelligible, was not considered a legitimate basis for their claims. Unsurprisingly, Hideyoshi's engagement with their neighbours saw these contradictions play out within interaction rituals. Encounters with Joseon prior to war are replete with misunderstandings as to Hideyoshi's title as they only recognised 'shōgun' as the near equivalent of 'king' despite his claims to hold a superior position. Conversely, Hideyoshi expressed his desire to bring the 'customs and values' of Japan to China based on its claimed unbroken imperial line.[30] Such sentiments surrounding the divinity of Japan's emperor ruling the 'country of the gods' was conveyed to the Ming in correspondence.[31] Ceremonies conducted at shrines of the war god Hachiman positioned his war as upholding East Asia's proper hierarchies based on *shinkoku* ideology.[32] Performing before the departure of the invasion fleet, Matsura Shigenobu, one of the daimyo leading the invasion and a close ally of Hideyoshi, climbed atop the deck of his ship and bowed to the statue of Hachiman housed at the nearby Iwashimizu Shrine.[33] While Japanese normative agendas had always been at odds with wider East Asia, Hideyoshi's insistence that interaction rituals reflect his normative agenda created tension as an unwillingness to compromise *shinkoku* ideology through

[29] Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 5-6; Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 122-123.
[30] 'Letter to the King of Korea' in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume. 1: From Earliest Times to 1600*, eds. William Theodore De Bary, Donald Keene, George Tanabe, and Paul Varley (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001): 465-467.
[31] Yoshi Kuno, *Japanese Expansion on the Asiatic Continent*, vol. 1. (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat, 1967): 329. Cited in Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 107.
[32] Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985): 44-49.
[33] Swope, *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail*, 87.

segmentation reflected a willingness to assert Japanese understandings at the expense of other beliefs.

While Hideyoshi did not establish a Japanocentric order, polycentric hierarchy struggled to restore itself in the same form in the aftermath of his invasions. Hideyoshi's challenge to the Ming order-building project did not end with this conflict, but rather contradictions in their authority claims and normative agendas remained open which resulted in the Tokugawa's refusal to engage in formal diplomacy for the remainder of the early modern period. An unwillingness to reconcile their order-building project with wider East Asia saw both sides struggled to resolve conflict through negotiations. Acknowledgement of equality with the Ming formed the heart of Hideyoshi's goals during negotiations.[34] This equality was to be recognised through a proposed dynastic marriage between the Wanli Emperor's daughters and Emperor Go-Yōzei, open trade with China, and recognition of their conquests in Korea up to the Han River. As a compromise position, the Japanese proposed Hideyoshi's recognition as *Mingguo guowang* (King of the Ming). Ambiguity around this title would cause problems as both actors held their own subjective understandings as to its meaning and what it conveyed about their authority. Hideyoshi misunderstood this title as conveying his authority over China in a manner reflecting his domestic position in relation to the Japanese emperor. The Ming in contrast sought Japanese withdrawal from the peninsula and formal acknowledgement of their suzerainty over Japan and Joseon, extending the possibility of investiture and trade in return for compliance. Aware of the gulf between the expectations of both sides, negotiators on the ground sought to manipulate their rulers by misrepresenting proposed terms. Indeed, Hideyoshi's proposed title 'King of the Ming' was misconstrued by Ming envoys as desire for traditional investiture back home. Thus, while Hideyoshi came to believe the Ming would offer either dynastical marriage or the title 'King of the Ming', the reigning Wanli Emperor believed investiture and trade would satisfy Japan.[35]

The irreconcilability of their authority claims and normative agendas meant a formal resolution to the conflict was not achieved. Following years of negotiation, in 1596 the Ming sent a delegation of four hundred to invest Hideyoshi, bestowing upon him seals, robes, and a crown in-line with investiture, but due to his ignorance of classical culture he mistakenly

[34] Kenneth M. Swope, "Deceit, Disguise, and Dependence: China, Japan, and the Future of the Tributary System," *The International History Review* 24, no. 4 (2002): 757-758.
[35] Swope, "Deceit, Disguise, and Dependence," 766-769.

understood this as recognising his authority claims. Indeed, Ming envoys were aware of this and sought to depart before their deception was realised. Translating the document before his departure, Hideyoshi realised the bestowed title had been 'King of Japan' rather than 'King of the Ming' and began preparations for a second invasion in response. Upon hearing the news, the Ming court (and not the envoys undertaking this deception) were offended by Japan's rejection of their generous offer to return to the fold.[36] Ultimately, the war ended not through negotiation but Japanese withdrawal meaning no formal resolution between competing order-building projects occurred. While conflict did not resume, interaction rituals struggled to be re-established. As discussed in the chapter on the Tokugawa order-building project, the shōgun avoided formal recognition of both Ming and Qing claims and proved unwilling to engage in an inside/outside dynamic. Resolution of conflict with Hideyoshi and later the Tokugawa proved difficult as the contradictions polycentric hierarchy managed through tactful ignorance on a day-to-day basis came to the forefront in peace negotiations and later efforts to unsuccessfully restore relations. Without the restoration of formal relations, performance strategies eventually allowed the Tokugawa and both the Ming and Qing order-building projects to co-exist even as their authority claims and normative agendas remained at odds.

The Ming-Qing Transition

With the collapse of the Ming in 1644, East Asia witnessed the turbulent breakdown of polycentric hierarchy as the Qing forcefully inserted themselves at the apex of the system. Rather than another dynastical shift, IR has recognised the Qing as a distinct group incorporating China into their wider Manchu-led empire.[37] Never considering themselves to be 'Chinese', the Qing feared 'Sinification' and maintained a distinct Manchu identity complicating efforts to legitimise their position.[38] A Western exonym, 'China' is better understood as "a range of chronologically discontinuous empire- and world-orderbuilding phenomena, located on overlapping territory and sharing some commonality of political-philosophical values. Nevertheless, they unfolded in dramatically different ways across

[36] Swope, "Deceit, Disguise, and Dependence," 777-779
[37] Laura Newby, "China: Pax Manjurica," *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 34, no. 4 (2011): 557-563.
[38] Phillips, "Making Empires," 51-53; Waley-Cohen, "The New Qing History," 195-197; Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1999): 108; Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001)

time."[39] For example, while Eurasia had been incorporated by the Tang historically, the scale of Qing penetration into these societies and the method their rule was legitimised better reflects a new order-building project rather than a continuous 'Chinese' hierarchy.[40] Nevertheless, awareness of the heterogeneous basis for Qing authority in Inner Asia reinforced negative perceptions in East Asia. Adopting Confucian cultural scripts only established a "cold peace" between the Qing and their East Asian neighbours as the threat of force remained present in their minds.[41] Even as the Qing claimed the Mandate of Heaven to legitimise their authority, initial rejection by large swathes of the Chinese population and East Asia as a whole resulted from the lingering perception they remained barbarians.[42] In light of this rejection, force was central to the Qing's establishment of order. This contrasts with Hideyoshi who rejected East Asian cultural scripts in his bid for revision. While not as extensive in its implications, the use of force to superimpose their authority claims and normative agendas over established rituals reveals another instance of breakdown.

The breakdown of ritual efficacy during the Ming-Qing Transition did not occur in isolation. Wider structural changes throughout the system in this period posed significant challenges for the Ming. Indeed, the 'general crisis' of the seventeenth century saw changes to the climate brought by the Little Ice Age which placed increasing pressure on food supplies culminating in peasant rebellions and eventually famine. By the 1640s, the Ming had seen millions of their people die due to hunger and resulting outbreaks of disease.[43] Furthermore, despite the threat posed by the Manchus, the concurrent peasant rebellions throughout China were perceived as the greater problem. Their proximity to China's agricultural and economic centre were seen as an existential threat whereas the Manchus to the north could eventually be appeased through material reward and reincorporated into their order in the Ming understanding. Indeed, peasant rebellions were seen to undermine Ming legitimacy. Compounding these structural issues was an increasingly poor relationship between the Ming royal family and its military elites which resulted in suboptimal responses

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[39] Joseph MacKay, "Rethinking Hierarchies in East Asian Historical IR," Journal of Global Security Studies 4, no. 4 (2019): 601.
[40] Perdue, *China Marches West*, 1-10.
[41] Andrew Phillips, "Contesting the Confucian peace: Civilization, barbarism and international hierarchy in East Asia," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 4 (2018): 742.
[42] Phillips, "Making Empires," 62.
[43] William S. Atwell, "Some Observations on the "Seventeenth-Century Crisis" in China and Japan," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 45, no. 2 (1986): 223-244; William S. Atwell, "A Seventeenth-Century 'General Crisis in East Asia?" *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 4 (1990): 661-682; Ka-wai Fan, "Climatic change and dynastic cycles in Chinese history: a review essay," *Climatic Change* 101, no. 3 (2010): 565-573.

to these challenges.[44] Together, these factors contributed to the outcome of the Ming-Qing transition as they undermined the capabilities of the Ming order and made the management of competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas through segmentation of little use to the challenges that existed.

The authority claims of the Qing order-building project struggled to find acceptance within East Asia's polycentric hierarchy. Here, Jurchen unification and the establishment of a distinct polity in northeast Asia challenged existing orders that had incorporated these groups previously. For most of their relationship with the Ming, Jurchen groups maintained an inside/outside dynamic. Investment as guard units within the Ming order did not preclude participation in other orders or eventually efforts to construct their own through force. Jurchens established confederations at odds with expected identities and responsibilities associated with their investiture. Indeed, leaders sometimes established their authority as 'khan' independent of reference to the Ming.[45] Thus, Nurhaci's unification of the Jurchens initially managed relations with the Ming by retaining their status within their order and even allowing defeated Jurchen leaders incorporated into their order to continue receiving Ming investiture.[46] It was only following the establishment of the Later Jin in 1616 that fears the Ming would exploit their economic difficulties and sow divisions among the newly formed Jurchen federation which produced tensions.[47] In the 'Seven Great Grievances' outlined in a 1618 edict, Nurhaci openly rejected Ming authority claims. Their main grievances consisted of violations of territorial agreements with Nurhaci, appropriation of their lands, intervention on behalf of rivals, slandering Nurhaci, fostering dissent, and executing Nurhaci's envoys.[48] No longer could their interests be satisfied through an inside/outside dynamic as their authority claims upon establishing a new polity challenged pre-existing Ming claims. Even if the formation of the future Qing polity and the resulting tensions following the Battle of Sarhū in 1619 represented a power vacuum rather than power transition, performance strategies no longer proved capable of securing Nurhaci's order-building project.[49]

As the normative agenda of the Qing developed, the formation of a Manchu identity through their order-building project sought to impose their understandings on pre-existing

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[44] Kenneth M. Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty, 1618-44* (London, Routledge, 2014): 6.
[45] Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty*, 16.
[46] Swope, *The Military Collapse of China's Ming Dynasty*, 18.
[47] Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 1997): 69.
[48] Pamela Kyle Crossley, "*Manzhou yuanliu kao* and the Formalization of Manchu Heritage," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (1987): 771.
[49] Kang and Ma, "Power Transitions," 141-143.

interaction rituals. Prevailing discourses of a civilized-barbarian distinction saw the claims of the Qing order-building project and its normative agenda perceived as illegitimate. This open rejection contrasts with the Qing's employment of multi-vocality by imposing their understandings on the interaction rituals within different contexts to assert their authority. For example, in 1635 Nurhaci's successor Hong Taiji defeated the Chahar Mongols and appropriated their captured imperial seal to claim descent from Chinggis Khan and the Yuan emperors.[50] Nevertheless, attempts at accommodation could also backfire. Initial correspondence with Joseon conveyed a desire for interaction rituals to ignore the Ming and establish a relationship as equals. Yet employing the term 'southern dynasty' to decentre the Ming was considered deeply inappropriate to Joseon who rejected their normative agenda and the implications it held for wider East Asian order.[51] By 1636 Hong Taiji established the Qing and renamed his people the Manchus. Having established Joseon as its vassal through force and conquered Inner Mongolia, he declared himself 'emperor' as well as 'khan'. Claiming to be the 'Son of Heaven' challenged the legitimacy of the Ming through a recognisable normative agenda acceptable in East Asia.[52] Yet continuing efforts to construct a separate Manchu identity and preserve their distinct customs at the same time undermined these efforts.[53] For East Asian actors, adopting the ruling language of the Ming could not remove the stigma of the perceived 'barbarian' identity of the Qing. The Qing normative agenda found that its flexibility and initial adaptability struggled to make inroads with the more established and inflexible normative agendas of East Asia who resented their claims.

Rather than dynastic change, the Ming-Qing transition reflects the evolution of East Asian order as polycentric hierarchy broke down and reconstituted itself. Even as interaction rituals were reemployed, East Asia's inside/outside dynamic became more severe considering the competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas. Rather than a complete revision as risked by Hideyoshi's invasions and Western imperialism in the nineteenth century, the breakdown following the Qing bid for hegemony instead adapted the existing system. Yet even as the Qing established relations with wider East Asia, segmentation played a critical role in managing two significant changes to polycentric hierarchy. First, the Qing

[50] Frederic Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1985): 203.
[51] Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia*, 217.
[52] Mark Elliott, "Whose Empire Shall It Be? Manchu Figurations of Historical Process in the Early Seventeenth Century," in *Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition*, ed. Lynn A, Struve (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005): 31-72.
[53] Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 204-209.

order constituted a Manchu rather than Chinese empire which saw the interaction rituals structuring relations adapted. As discussed in the chapter on the Joseon order-building project, their depiction of Joseon interweaves 'traditional' features of East Asian diplomacy with elements conveying their Manchu identity. Joseon had been conquered like other Inner Asian peoples and its status was conveyed differently. Joseon received Manchu envoys that from the reign of the Qianlong Emperor rode horses in line with their 'marital customs' rather than employ sedan chairs like the Ming. Manchu envoys only took part in the necessary interaction rituals and did not take part in the literary-social gatherings historically associated with these encounters. Seals of investiture initially only carried Manchu characters before Chinese characters also came to be used.[54] While later abandoned, King Yeonjo's 1724 investiture required a separate ritual re-enacting King Injo's submission to the Qing in full view of Joseon's court.[55] Conversely, as 'Annam' and Ryukyu had not been conquered they continued to receive Han Chinese envoys and maintained interaction rituals with a greater level of continuity. Thus, although minor, changes to these practices as seen in the Joseon case study heightened antipathy even as the means of enacting the Qing normative agenda had strong continuities with the past. Beyond East Asia, the multi-vocal nature on which the Qing constructed order throughout Eurasia represented another major departure from the Ming whose rule had never extended as far or been as flexible. Although polycentric hierarchy re-emerged, cultural scripts were adapted to suit the Qing as East Asian traditions formed only part of the wider ritual apparatus of their order.

Second, perceptions of the Qing as 'barbarian' continued across the early modern period and saw segmentation become far more critical in managing contradictions. As discussed throughout this project, a clear distinction between 'China' and the Qing highlights actors in the early modern period understood the two as different. While Qing hegemony was never challenged, this overlooks the attitudes of East Asian rulers who either resigned themselves to participation, harboured hidden animosities, or avoided participating within interaction rituals entirely. While Đại Việt and Joseon considered the Qing to be barbarians, it is Tokugawa Japan's complete lack of direct contact which highlights the increasing importance of segmentation to managing order in the early modern period. While Tokugawa Japan had not restored relations with the Ming either, under the preceding Ashikaga bakufu

[54] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 62, 67-69, 74, 78.
[55] Nicola Di Cosmo, Hiroki Oka, Nobuaki Murakami and Pamela Kyle Crossley, "The Manchu Great State," Chap. 5 in *Sacred Mandates: Asian International Relations Since Chinggis Khan*, eds. Timothy Brook, Michael Van Walt Van Praag and Miek Boltjes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018): 153.

the daimyō nominally under their control had recognised their authority to receive trading rights. Like wider East Asia, they saw Qing rule as constituting a major ontological shift regarding the nature of order in the region. Works such as the *Kai hentai* ('Metamorphosis from civilized to barbarian') written in the late seventeenth century by Hayashi Gahō reflect the perception of the Qing not only as 'barbarian' but causing 'China' to undergo a profound decline in status under their rule.[56] Again, a distinction is drawn between the Qing as rulers and 'China' as a civilizational ideal. This fear of the Manchus saw the Tokugawa draw parallels with the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century. Misunderstandings of East Asia's geography heightened tensions as the Tokugawa mistakenly believed 'Orankai' ('Manchuria') was physically connected to Hokkaido.[57] This reflects discussions in the Tokugawa case study over Ryukyu's status, with the *Daigaku wakumon* expressing alarm around a possible Qing invasion if the competing claims of their order-building project could not be managed.[58] Symptomatic of wider tensions in East Asia, not only did the interaction rituals between the Qing and East Asia depart from those of the Ming, but the actors themselves perceived their emergence to represent a profound shift within their known world.

Nineteenth Century Western Imperialism

The arrival of Western imperialism in East Asia during the nineteenth century marked a profound shift. Not just representing another breakdown of polycentric hierarchy, it eliminated the existing basis order had been managed. Despite professions of sovereign equality in diplomacy, Western actors and eventually their East Asian counterparts themselves reconstituted existing hierarchies to place far greater demands on subordinate polities. Throughout the early modern period, European traders had been a consistent presence. Their efforts to establish a foothold in East Asia were limited only by an inability to bridge the geographical divide with the technological capabilities of the time. Thus, initial encounters between East Asia and the West consisted of seeking trade concessions, the enslavement of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean persons, engagement in piracy, intervention in conflicts, and supporting the work of missionaries.[59] Despite the prominence of these events

[56] Angela Schottenhammer, "Japan: The Tiny Dwarf? Sino-Japanese Relations from the Kangxi to the Qianlong Reigns," *Asia Research Institute, Working Paper Series*, No. 106 (2008): 10-12.
[57] Mizuno Norihito, "China in Tokugawa Foreign Relations: The Tokugawa Bakufu's Perception of and Attitudes toward Ming-Qing China," *Sino-Japanese Studies* 15 (2003): 136.
[58] Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu*, 20-23.
[59] De Sousa, *The Portuguese Slave Trade in Early Modern Japan;* Yongjin Zhang, "Curious and exotic encounters: Europeans as supplicants in the Chinese imperium, 1513-1793," Chap. 3 in *International Orders in*

in Western historiography, their impact on order for most of the early modern period was limited. As Europe existed on the periphery of the region, interactions occurred based on a logic of appropriateness and demands on behaviour established by East Asia's order-building projects.[60] Segmentation was central to efforts distancing Western actors by dictating when, where, and how encounters took place. Consequently, the escalation of imperialist ambitions in the nineteenth century represented a black swan event – a series of incursions beyond the normal expectations of East Asian international life that could not be accounted for based on historical experience and resulted in profound changes to the system. Unlike the previous instances of the breakdown of polycentric hierarchy within East Asia, the rupture posed by Western imperialism challenged not just their authority claims and normative agendas, but the performance strategies managing tension and contradiction within the system. Alongside challenges to its normative foundations, acts associated with segmentation were deliberately proscribed to eliminate the inside/outside dynamic preserving the autonomy of East Asian actors and allowing them to keep the West on their periphery. East Asia rapidly became interconnected with the global system on terms no longer dictated by their order-building projects.

In the process of engaging with the Western powers seeking to impose their authority claims and normative agenda on East Asia, actors came to slowly adopt their diplomatic practices. Here, the shift towards Western-style diplomacy closed off the ability to engage in segmentation. As will be demonstrated in this section, the introduction of Western practices was possible only through the exercise of power to force these changes on East Asian actors. Although not exhaustive, two major changes came to demonstrate this. First, the shift from the strict bilateralism of segmentation towards multilateral diplomacy created an environment wherein East Asian powers could no longer logistically engage with their foreign counterparts on a case-by-case basis. Concepts such as Most-favoured nation status introduced by the West required constant communication and the sharing of information between parties to ensure this. Second, the establishment of embassies by Western powers throughout East Asia ensured their constant presence within their boundaries. A distinct inside and outside could no longer exist. For example, the Convention of Beijing concluding

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the Early Modern World: Before the Rise of the West, eds. Shogo Suzuki, Yongjin Zhang and Joel Quirk (London: Routledge, 2014): 58-68.

[60] Zhang, "Curious and exotic encounters," 55-75; Shogo Suzuki, "Europe at the periphery of the Japanese world order," Chap. 4 in *International Orders in the Early Modern World: Before the Rise of the West*, eds. Shogo Suzuki, Yongjin Zhang and Joel Quirk (London: Routledge, 2014): 76-93.

the Second Opium War (1856-1860 saw the Qing dynasty grant Most-favoured nation status on the United Kingdom, United States, France, and Russia. Furthermore, it forced the establishment of the Beijing Legation Quarter and permanent diplomatic missions therein. With this, it became difficult for the Qing to justify tributary diplomacy in relations with the West.[61] This dynamic can also be seen with the establishment of permanent missions through the Harris Treaty (1858) between Japan and the United States.[62] It was reflected soon after in the Treaty of Ganghwa (1876) between Meiji Japan and Joseon.[63] In each of these examples, the decision to adopt Western diplomatic norms was not a simple process of negotiation but the outcome of intimidation through gunboat diplomacy or even war. As the arrival of the West brought shifts in the conduct of diplomacy, existing practices in East Asia facilitating segmentation struggled to survive in their wake.

Western actors forced their authority claims over East Asia by directly challenging segmentation and the performance strategies managing polycentric hierarchy as a basis for constructing order. Warfare presented the most immediate means of securing material interests and denying East Asian rulers a space to express order on their terms. For example, the Nguyễn dynasty faced ongoing conflict with French imperial ambitions. The Cochinchina Campaign (1858-1862) saw France establish the southern provinces of Đại Việt as a separate colony. By 1884, France conquered the entire country, establishing an 'Indochinese Union' separating it into the protectorates of Annam, Tonkin, Cochinchina, alongside Cambodia, and Laos that operated under separate regimes within their empire.[64] Thus, not only were the Nguyễn subordinated within the French hierarchy but the dynamic of colonial rule removed the ability for an inside/outside dynamic to exist.[65] As such, it actively undercut their ability to produce their authority autonomously. Gunboat diplomacy further pressed Western

[61] Chia Chen Chu, "Diplomatic Quarter in Peiping," PhD Diss., (University of Ottowa, 1944): 7-9; Michael J. Moser and Yeone Wei-Chih Moser, *Foreigners within the Gates: The Legations at Peking*, Revised Edition (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2006).

[62] Although the Treaty of Kanagawa (1854) had called for the opening of an American Consulate, the Tokugawa had agreed to this in word only as they sought to reverse their opening to the West. It was only after continued negotiations culminating in the Harris Treaty that the exchange of permanent diplomatic representatives occurred. Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2006): 40-45.

[63] Jinwung Kim, *A History of Korea: From "Land of the Morning Calm" to States in Conflict* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012): 287-288.

[64] Anderson, "Distinguishing Between China and Vietnam," 275.

[65] The conquest of Đại Việt was viewed with anxiety by Joseon who having resisted French attack on Ganghwa Island in 1866 came to draw parallels between Đại Việt and Joseon's situation in the late nineteenth century. Youn Dae-Yeong, "The Loss of Vietnam: Korean Views of Vietnam in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 9, no. 1 (2014): 71-76.

authority claims through unequal treaties and imposing extraterritoriality throughout East Asia. The result again was the elimination of segmentation as a means of managing order. This is seen in the ultimately failed efforts of the Tokugawa order to preserve its *sakoku* maritime controls by avoiding confrontation with Western actors seeking to open its ports. Throughout the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century the Tokugawa increasingly faced deliberate intrusions by Western vessels. For example, under the purview of Edo, Ryukyu was instructed to avoid the West through an 1844 document entitled *Sakumei sakukan* ('Invention of Offices') creating the fake posts of *sôrikan* and *fuseikan* forcing foreigners to engage with a bureaucracy designed for the sole purpose of stalling them and preventing them from meeting anyone with actual authority.[66] Another example can be seen in 1861 wherein Tsushima similarly sought to deflect Russian efforts to establish it as a protectorate. Russian gunboat diplomacy pressured Tsushima to formalise protectorate status and openly ignored bakufu restrictions on interactions between foreigners and daimyo. Yet it was only the intervention of the British, rather than performance strategies that ended Russian efforts.[67] Despite these examples, bakufu efforts to control interactions on their terms had become impossible following the signing the Harris Treaty in 1854 following Commodore Perry's expedition. As alluded to earlier, this opened Shimoda and Hakodate to trade and established the first consulate in Edo soon after.[68] These examples highlight how Western authority claims, enforced through force or the threat of its use, eliminated segmentation and associated practices as viable strategies.

In the face of Western imperialism, East Asian normative agendas came under direct challenge as the basis for legitimating order. Western belief in the superiority of their normative agendas vis-à-vis East Asia and an increasing technological advantage allowing them to press these claims saw them unwilling to compromise with the existing polycentric hierarchy. James Hevia's account of the Macartney Embassy in 1793 highlights this dynamic, with both the British and Qing empires producing their own "ruling bloc for the maintenance of its position and the reconfiguring of its social world."[69] Each produced its own complex hierarchy with mutually exclusive understandings of formal diplomacy resting on naturalised understandings of their universality. Understood rituals, formal or otherwise, struggled to find

[66] Tinello, "The termination of the Ryukyuan embassies to Edo," 145.
[67] Viktor Shmagin, "They Fear Us, yet Cling to Us: Russian Negotiations with Tsushima Officials during the 1861 Tsushima Incident," *The International History Review* 39, no. 3 (2017): 521-545.
[68] Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*, 79-81.
[69] Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, 25.

common ground.[70] As a 'foreign' dynasty, the Qing found the British decision to challenge the protocols of Guest Ritual by not kowtowing a threat since their domestic audience, particularly the predominantly Han Chinese bureaucracy, observed these interactions as central to legitimising authority. Symbolically bound to preserve these rituals despite significant costs internationally, the Qing maintained interaction rituals at odds with the West up until the First Opium War.[71] Western justification of their actions and the refusal to recognise the legitimacy of East Asian order-building projects maintained 'tributary' status was incompatible with the 'natural' sovereign-state system despite imposing their own colonial hierarchies justified by their own normative agendas through concepts such as standards of civilization and racism. The peace negotiations of the Sino-French War (1884-1885) convey the importance to the West of asserting their normative agenda. France insisted in the Tientsin Accords that the Qing renounce their suzerain rights to tribute from the Nguyễn and respect their independence to enter into treaties.[72] This was symbolically conveyed upon signing the Treaty of Hue (1884) by melting down the imperial seal given to Gia Long by the Qing in 1804.[73] Yuanchong Wang argues both the Sino-French War (1884-1885) and the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) were not fought over territory within an empire, but instead to preserve the prerogative of the Qing to maintain the normative agenda of their order. Both conflicts resulted in the Qing recognising 'Annam' and Joseon's sovereign equality, ending the interaction rituals forming the basis for diplomacy.[74] While the breakdown of polycentric hierarchy had similarly resulted from an unwillingness to manage tensions from their diverging normative agendas, Western imperialism sought to eliminate these entirely.

Thus, the most significant transformation to order in East Asia in the nineteenth century was the elimination of segmentation. Performance strategies allowing segmentation to be a viable approach to order building could not reconcile with the far more intrusive character of the sovereign-state system. In practice, Western imperialism demanded open trade, a permanent diplomatic presence, nominal sovereign equality, and in some cases the stationing of foreign troops that presented a hard barrier to an inside/outside dynamic. With much of the Asian region falling into colonial or semi-colonial relationships with the West,

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[70] Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*, 26-28.
[71] Banks, "Fields of Practice," 546.
[72] Lloyd E. Eastman, *Thrones and Mandarins: China's Search for a Policy During the Sino-French Controversy, 1880-1885* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967): 123-124.
[73] Anderson, "Distinguishing Between China and Vietnam," 275.
[74] Wang, *Remaking the Chinese Empire*, 16.

hierarchy was not eliminated as much as it was entrenched further. As the case of Japan highlights, East Asian culture and associated practices as a basis for order came to be seen as ineffective in the wider international system. Following the Meiji Restoration, Japan actively emulated the West both in their domestic socio-economic reforms and foreign policy to counter arguments they did not meet the standards of civilization. It demonstrated this through acts of 'mimetic imperialism' such as the 1874 invasion of Taiwan. In response to the killing of fifty-four Ryukyuan sailors by the indigenous Paiwan people, Japan sought compensation from the Qing. Refusing compensation on the grounds the Paiwan fell beyond their jurisdiction, Japan launched a punitive expedition to attack the culprits.[75] To justify their actions, Japan emulated the West in deeds and word by following the precedents established under international law. Furthermore, in 1875 Japan consciously imitated their experience with Commodore Perry by employing gunboat diplomacy to force Joseon to open its ports. The resulting Treaty of Ganghwa presented Joseon with unequal terms, securing the opening of two additional ports alongside Busan, extraterritorial rights, and Joseon's acknowledgement it was an independent state capable of entering into such agreements. This denied its hierarchical subordination to the Qing which Joseon had used to avoid establishing diplomatic relationships with Western actors.[76] Exposure to the larger world-system saw the practices of the sovereign-state system not only increasingly become the appropriate form of conduct but the most effective for securing order in East Asia.

Furthermore, the practices of Western imperialism found themselves redeployed and justified by East Asian rulers on existing normative agendas. While discourse remained consistent, the practices accompanying it like segmentation gave way to direct intrusion. This can be seen through the case of the late Qing, who asserted greater control over Joseon's internal affairs at odds with the significant autonomy that existed over the course of their relationship. Day-to-day management of relations with Joseon shifted from the Board of Rites to the Commissioner for the Northern Ports. Conscious of the loss of Ryukyu and 'Annam' to Western imperialism, the Imo Incident in 1882 that saw an uprising against King Gojong's Japanese supported reforms led to direct Qing intervention.[77] That same year, the Qing concluded an unequal treaty opening Hanseong exclusively to China (although other

[75] Robert Eskildsen, "Of Civilization and Savages: The Mimetic Imperialism of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (2002): 388-418; Kerr, *Okinawa*, 356-360.
[76] Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1995): 43-49.
[77] Ming-te Lin, "Li Hung-chang's Suzerain Policy toward Korea, 1882-1894," *Chinese Studies in History* 24, no. 4 (1991): 71-74.

actors followed) and established extraterritoriality for Qing subjects.[78] However, these efforts were limited by the presence of Japan and other Western actors actively challenging their exclusive claims. Facing this opposition, the Qing resorted to using their normative agenda to legitimise their claims as seen in the death of Queen Dowager Cho in 1890. Dispatching a condolence mission, it sought to perform before Western eyes an 'exotic' ritual wherein King Gojong received Qing envoys in a public manner confirming Joseon's long history as a willing tributary. For their part, Joseon had sought to avoid participating in this interaction ritual as acquiescence would legitimise Qing claims and risk future interventions.[79] While confirming the firmness of the Qing's claims, being removed from the language of Western diplomacy made this gambit ultimately unconvincing to the West.[80] Competition over Joseon culminated in Japanese annexation in 1910. Penetration into Korea continued as direct political oversight and an eventual concerted policy of cultural assimilation was pursued. Its normative agenda combined Western narratives of progress alongside elements of *shinkoku* ideology to justify its actions. Colonial historiography pushed a 'Little China' thesis presenting Korea as a backwards and stagnant society whose entire culture had been appropriated from China unlike 'advanced countries' who demonstrated continual progress.[81] These narratives were complimented by references to Empress Jingū's legendary conquest and the *Joseon tongsinsa* which were seen as evidence of Korea's historical tributary status. Hierarchy under colonial rule was near total in its incorporation and departed from Joseon's autonomy throughout the early modern period.[82] This case demonstrates that even as existing normative agendas were maintained, conduct differed from previous iterations of polycentric hierarchy and how it was managed.

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[78] Cho Se-hyun, "Beiyang Naval Force (北洋水師) and Joseon-Ching Relation (朝淸關係) in 1880s," *Journal of Asian Historical Studies* 124 (2013): 211-254; Moon Myungki, "Korea-China Treaty System in the 1880s and the Opening of Seoul: Review of the Joseon-Qing Communication and Commerce Rules," *Journal of Northeast Asian History* 5, no. 2 (2008): 85-120; Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, 58.

[79] Joshua Van Lieu, "The Politics of Condolence: Contested Representations of Tribute in Late Nineteenth Century Chosŏn-Qing Relations," *The Journal of Korean Studies (1979-)* 14, no. 1 (2009): 83-115.

[80] Lin, "Li Hung-chang's Suzerain Policy toward Korea," 83-90; Larisa Zabrovskaia, "Qing China's Misguided Foreign Policy and the Struggle to Dominate Korea (According to the Russian Archive)," *Korean Studies* 44, no. 1 (2020): 90-91.

[81] Duncan, *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty*, 3-6.

[82] Even today, the "idea of a stagnant past giving rise to a backward present" and the consequent need to 'catch-up' remains embedded not only in South Korean historiography, but the larger national consciousness of the country. Owen Miller, "The idea of stagnation in Korean historiography," *Korean Histories* 2, no. 1 (2010): 3.

Conclusion

Although East Asia's polycentric hierarchy broke down and reconstituted itself at several instances across the early modern period, differences existed between each consequent order. Despite extended periods of stability between them, tensions between competing order-building projects continued. For the most part, the use of segmentation and deployment of performance strategies allowed for tensions to be managed. Yet as shifts in the social, political, and economic context of East Asia occurred and altered the character of participating actors, a loss of ritual efficacy occurred. As seen during Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula, the Ming-Qing transition, and the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century, the specific nature of these breakdowns differed. Yet until the arrival of Western imperialism, polycentric hierarchy continued to re-emerge. While the nature of interaction rituals structuring relations shifted in their formal meanings and subjective understandings, resulting tensions between competing hierarchies and their visions of order could still be managed through spatial organisation. As Seo-hyun Park highlights, hierarchy in East Asia was subject to being imagined and reimagined over time even as it endured as the organising principle of the region. Indeed, "hierarchical order in the region was re-established with stronger impetus in the late nineteenth century via European gunboat diplomacy, imperialism, and "civilizational" standards."[83] A combination of greater control over subordinate actors and a consequently more exploitative hierarchical relationship marked East Asia's entry into the Western-led international system. It is in how competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas were managed that we the see changes to polycentric order. These reinforce the centrality of segmentation to ongoing management of competing hierarchies in early modern East Asia.

East Asia's diverging normative agendas highlight clashes preceding the breakdown of polycentric hierarchy occurred over interpretations of shared culture. Here, the loss of ritual efficacy in micro-level encounters over time jeopardised the equilibrium of relationships. Cultural 'scripts' for the performance of interaction rituals defined appropriate forms for performing interaction rituals without fixing consistent understandings of status. Here, the presence of "cultural key words" taking the form of "common sayings and proverbs, frequent collocations, conversational routines…and terms of address and reference"

[83] Seo-Hyun Park, *Sovereignty and Status in East Asian International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017): 8.

provided a distinct language for expressing order.[84] Yet scripts leave room for interpretation, with their success driven by an actor's ability to convince audiences through their performance.[85] Despite juxtaposition between formal meanings and subjective understandings locatable within interaction rituals, performance strategies allowed tensions around interpretations to be managed as they existed within a shared social milieu. Nevertheless, this did not preclude disagreement over meanings challenging the identity of participants. Consequently, breakdowns occurred when a loss in ritual efficacy saw participation in interaction rituals threaten ontological security. Toyotomi Hideyoshi's emphasis on *shinkoku* ideology openly challenged wider East Asian culture and accounted for difficulties in reconciling his ambitions within polycentric hierarchy. Conversely, Qing overtures to East Asia during their struggles against the Ming found their efforts to reconcile normative agendas within interaction rituals initially rejected due to their 'barbarian' stigma. It was ultimately the threat of force that imposed their understandings and maintained these rituals. Unsurprisingly, the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century saw the most significant clash between not only normative agendas, but the cultural contexts they derived from. While nominally introducing sovereign equality as a concept, Western imperialism in practice introduced new bases for normative agendas to legitimise hierarchy. The sovereign-state system allowed civilizational standards to be employed in stratifying East Asia within the international system. Furthermore, racism legitimised other hierarchies. Just as Japan used these to justify their imperial project in East Asia, it simultaneously presented a barrier to their full acceptance by the West as seen in Japan's efforts to unsuccessfully seek a racial equality clause at the Versailles Conference.[86] While delegitimising the normative agendas of East Asian hierarchies, it would be in how this was enacted that the most significant changes were observable.

The methods by which competing authority claims were enforced throughout East Asia following polycentric hierarchy's breakdown saw significant changes by the nineteenth century. Throughout the early modern period, segmentation as a method for managing competing order-building projects maintained stability between East Asian hierarchies. The arrival of the West repurposed hierarchy, allowing it to penetrate further into East Asian society. Simultaneously it eliminated segmentation as a basis for maintaining order. As I have

[84] Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka, "Cultural scripts: What are they and what are they good for?" *Intercultural Pragmatics* 1, no. 2 (2004): 154.
[85] Apter, "Politics as theatre," 226-227.
[86] Park, *Sovereignty and Status*, 8-9.

argued across this project, limitations on the interaction capacity across this period accounted for the prominence of interaction rituals in legitimising authority in East Asia. As communication technology and the means to bridge geographical divides were limited, competing authority claims could simultaneously legitimise rival order-building projects. Furthermore, it allowed for segmentation to be viable in controlling movement and hiding contradictions. This does not mean the direct imposition of authority was absent. The Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects placed stringent controls over regional elites, smaller polities, and minorities within their boundaries. Shifting between heterogenisation and homogenisation, they limited their ability to engage in spatial organisation and constructed identities in-line with their orders. Thus, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and the Qing's use of force represented an extension of these efforts. Only their inability to eliminate space for rival order-building projects allowed for an inside/outside dynamic to return.

Consequently, the arrival of Western imperialism and the methods their authority claims were pressed represents an expansion of polycentric hierarchy. Here, East Asia continued to be organised along hierarchical lines by multiple centres including Europe, the United States, and eventually Japan. Methods of coercion including the establishment of treaty ports and extraterritoriality converted most East Asian polities into colonies or semi-colonies. This established direct control and saw the inside/outside dynamic of segmentation eliminated. Western actors did not tolerate competing bases on which to legitimise authority. These diplomatic strategies, while an example of spatial organisation, are distinct from the segmentation of space that existed throughout the early modern period. The result of unequal treaties and gunboat diplomacy, they sought to ensure patterns of interaction reflected Western understandings and sought to prevent ambiguity. This departs from segmentation as considering the technological constraints of the early modern period, it had sought to manage ambiguity and prevent contradictions being openly acknowledged. Pressing their intersecting authority claims across East Asia saw explicit and implicit agreements determine when intervention was appropriate and allowed co-existing spheres of influence to be carved out.[87] This 'common-pool hierarchy' wherein multiple superordinates imposed their will on a subordinate was recognised and managed through cooperation by all participants.[88] By the

[87] Christopher David LaRoche, "'For the Happiness of the World': The Geopolitics of Great Power Intervention, 1815-2015," PhD Diss., (University of Toronto, 2019)
[88] Jesse Dillon Savage, "Common-Pool Hierarchy: Explaining the Emergence of Cooperative Hierarchies," *International Studies Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2021): 712-723.

end of the early modern period, hierarchical orders had penetrated further into all levels of East Asian society.

Chapter Seven – Conclusion

"*I speak and speak,*" Marco says, "*but the listener retains only the words he is expecting. The description of the world to which you lend a benevolent ear is one thing; the description that will go the rounds of the groups of stevedores and gondoliers on the street outside my house the day of my return is another; and yet another, that which I might dictate late in life, if I were taken prisoner by Genoese pirates and put in irons in the same cell with a writer of adventure stories. It is not the voice that commands the story: it is the ear.*"

\- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*[1]

Across Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, the explorer Marco Polo regales Kublai Khan in a series of conversations describing cities visited throughout his travels. Overseeing a vast and expanding empire, the Great Khan seeks out the tales of merchants coming and going from his capital. His purpose is clear – by learning all that can be known of the innumerable cites under his rule, he hopes to better control them and assert his authority. Yet through conversations with Polo, Kublai comes to realise that in "the lives of emperors there is a moment which follows pride in the boundless extension of the territories we have conquered… the melancholy and relief of knowing we shall soon give up any thought of knowing and understanding them."[2] Successive tales highlight how the nature of cities are not only shaped by the contradictory perspectives of individuals, but in how their memories shift over time. Indeed, Polo acknowledges his recollections are centred in his memory of home. As he notes "every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice."[3] Carrying different meanings and significances to the myriad travellers, cities are perceived

> in knowing what words to speak, what actions to perform, and in what order and rhythm; or else someone's gaze, answer, gesture is enough; it is enough for someone to do something for the sheer pleasure of doing it, and for his pleasure to become the pleasure of others: at that moment, all spaces change, all heights, distances; the city is transfigured, becomes crystalline, transparent as a dragonfly.[4]

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[1] Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cites*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego, California: Harvest Books, 1974): 135.
[2] Calvino, *Invisible Cites*, 5.
[3] Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 86.
[4] Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 155.

For as Polo deftly puts it "No one, wise Kublai, knows better than you that the city must never be confused with the words that describe it."[5] Much like the cities living in Marco Polo's memories, the rulers of early modern East Asia took on multiple identities in the countless performances recurring across the courts of reigning dynasties. That these would contradict was almost inevitable.

Much like Calvino's imaginary Marco Polo, my project captures how competing visions of order existed simultaneously. Far more than the simple recounting of tales, I identify how East Asia's rulers undertook their own order-building projects and sought to express these through their relationships with others. Within interaction rituals, actors performed in-line with formal meanings which conveyed understandings again and again irrespective of genuine belief. Participation in a diverse array of rituals led to actors taking on contradictory identities. Yet unlike the voiceless cities who took form in the ear of Kublai Khan, East Asian rulers remained sensitive to their portrayal. While ongoing performances saw them take on contradictory roles, they retained agency in their participation and how they sought to be conveyed. Disagreements required the tensions of competing performances of order be addressed.

Through this approach, my project has put forward a more holistic account of early modern East Asia that furthers efforts within IR to move beyond Sinocentrism. My conclusion proceeds as follows. First, I reflect on what this project has done. Second, I highlight the main contributions of this project in relation to historical Asian IR and the wider discipline. Third, I conclude by suggesting future research avenues arising from this project's findings.

Summary

At its heart, this project brings the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects to the fore within IR. While always part of existing regional narratives, this has predominantly been as subordinates within successive 'Chinese' order-building projects. Rather than disputing their participation within these hierarchies, I instead centre the puzzle of how their simultaneous hierarchies could endure without converging on shared understandings. IR has not fully grappled with formal meanings imposed on interaction rituals existing alongside contradictory subjective understandings. Here, competing authority

[5] Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 61.

claims and diverging normative agendas are locatable within performances of interaction rituals. This is significant as they constituted how actors experienced hierarchy day-to-day. By taking their implications seriously, I conceive the outcome of competing efforts as polycentric hierarchy. Absent a shared organising logic, this formation should produce tension at best and conflict at worst. Nevertheless, they endured. To explain how competing order-building projects endured, I argue spatial organisation represents an underexplored avenue explaining long-term stability. Introducing the segmentation of space, I highlight how East Asian rulers legitimised authority within their orders on an inside/outside dynamic. Operating within distinct spaces allowed actors to take on contradictory identities. Furthermore, performance strategies employed at the micro-level allowed actors to enforce or distance themselves from particular understandings of interaction rituals. Together, I provide a more holistic account of East Asia's stability as actors managed, but never resolved, tensions on an ongoing basis.

To demonstrate my argument, I employed the following methodology. My goal was clear – locating contestation within interaction rituals highlights how competing order-building projects were established and managed in practice. Thus, my project explores how actors experienced performances at the micro-level. Focusing on actor dispositions highlights greater contestation underneath East Asia's seeming stability. The following methods identify how actors departed from Sinocentric order and the extent they were successful in establishing distinct hierarchies. First, I employ the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects as case studies to demonstrate how competing hierarchies operated. I stratify each as 'most-likely' to 'least-likely' in pursuing order independent of 'China' and assess their success in establishing hierarchy. Here, I outline their vision of order, basis for segmentation, and illustrate two sub-cases wherein they incorporated or resisted incorporation into neighbouring orders. Second, I employ process tracing to show how embassies constituting formal diplomacy were composed, mobilised, and presented. Tracing these interaction rituals and the juxtaposition between formal meanings and subjective understandings identified the extent of an actor's incorporation. Likewise, it shows segmentation's relative effectiveness in establishing a logic of appropriateness. Third, I capture the diverging narratives interaction rituals conveyed. It reveals how effective performance strategies were in pushing or resisting particular interpretations. Overall, this approach captures how micro-level contestation scaled upwards to have implications at the meso- and macro-level of the international system.

Theoretical Framework

My account of order in early modern East Asia establishes both the formation structuring relations between actors as well as the process managing it on an ongoing basis. In providing this account, I emphasised one point – hierarchy did not account for stability as much as require an explanation for its endurance. As seen across this project, rather than focus on differences in military, economic, and social prominence stratifying actors hierarchically alone, I focused on the interaction rituals structuring relations between them in practice. While asymmetries shaped interaction rituals, it was their repeated performance which established identities within relationships. In light of the contradictions resulting from several actors pursuing this simultaneously, it becomes apparent another process managed hierarchy. Therefore, I explain order on the following basis. First, I establish the region as a polycentric hierarchy emerging out of the intersection of competing order-building projects. Second, I establish how segmentation of space kept these competing order-building projects distanced in separate locations on an inside/outside dynamic. Third, I show how performance strategies were deployed during interaction rituals to either enforce or distance actors from particular understandings.

Polycentric hierarchy represents how this project conceptualises order in early modern East Asia. Departing from existing monocentric accounts, polycentric hierarchy is a heterarchical formation resulting from order-building projects intersecting based on competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas. Therefore, participation in different hierarchies placed conflicting demands on actors as they took different statuses and identities clashing with their own understanding. These tensions are observable in the interaction rituals occurring at the micro-level that comprised how actors experienced and understood hierarchy. It persisted as despite tensions, managing rather than resolving contradictions best served competing demands on material and ontological security. While deference within hierarchy stabilised relations and achieved material security, performances threatened identity and challenged ontological security. Furthermore, pursuing hierarchy in a polycentric formation was not an equal affair. Both asymmetry in capabilities and deeper structural norms privileged certain actors over others. Nevertheless, structural inequalities remained contestable as actors retained agency in curating relationships. Furthermore, pursuing one's own hierarchy offered a means to contest relative subordination elsewhere as these were established through interaction rituals at the micro-level. They structured relations

between actors in practice and recognised their authority claims and normative agenda during performances. Thus, pulled in multiple directions and unable to agree on a shared organising logic, actors relied on negotiating, mediating, and accommodating one another's competing hierarchies to prevent the collapse of the system altogether.

Segmentation of space managed competing order-building projects by establishing boundaries between them. Boundaries were maintained as actors retained authority in dictating when, where, and how encounters took place within space at the micro-level. This managed contradictions by segmenting competing order-building projects within polycentric hierarchy. Space consists of the physical location bounded by actors establishing sites to exercise authority within their hierarchical order. It is observed in the area wherein a logic of appropriateness is enforced through demands on behaviour. These are either de-jure spaces established through formalised boundaries or de-facto spaces existing in practice. Conversely, segmentation is the process controlling encounters between actors. As such, it is observed in practice through the ability of an actor to control movement in a given area – whether that be formal diplomacy, trade, or migration as examples. It established a logic of appropriateness legitimising the authority of the order within by establishing interaction rituals unique to the location. Furthermore, it placed demands on the behaviour forcing actors to comply with understandings of hierarchy in practice by controlling movement within and between spaces. This resulted in an inside/outside dynamic throughout the system. Alongside physically bounding a space, it established a perceptual field and ensured contradictions would be hidden or at the very least overlooked. The resulting ambiguity facilitated the competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas of polycentric hierarchy. Ultimately, the inside/outside dynamic of segmentation rested on a desire to not openly acknowledge contradictions within polycentric hierarchy.

Performance strategies allowed actors to enforce or distance themselves from the implications around participation in interaction rituals. These choreographed encounters constituted how hierarchical order was contested. Considering the problems associated with this kind of contestation, it reinforces the centrality of segmentation in allowing performance strategies to be viable. Interaction rituals conveyed narratives and assigned status agnostic to belief. Mobilisation in performances conveyed symbolic meanings and imposed material costs required for staging these. Yet a juxtaposition between formal meanings and subjective understandings of interaction rituals increased over time. Formal meanings represented the agreed upon protocol structuring the choreography of interaction rituals. Conversely,

subjective understandings represent how participants understood these and shaped their performances. Non-participation was difficult and carried significant costs within a relationship. Furthermore, formal protocol choreographing interaction rituals formed thick structures difficult for actors to circumnavigate. Thus, tensions between formal meanings and subjective understandings necessitated performance strategies allowing actors to mitigate threats to their identity at the micro-level of these day-to-day interactions. They consisted of confrontation, accommodation, manipulation, and avoidance. These are situated on two axes. First, performance strategies are covert or overt. This identifies the degree interventions are observable. Second, performance strategies are benign or malign. This identifies an actor's attitude when altering the performance of interaction rituals. While taking place at the micro-level, interventions into performances highlighted their significance to managing order.

Case Studies

Selecting the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects as cases demonstrates the extent of contestation throughout early modern East Asia. Doing so moves away from Sinocentric accounts that remain predominant. While IR has positioned a relational approach at the forefront by highlighting negotiation between ruling dynasties in China and wider East Asia as establishing order, it remains limited in not considering wider efforts to construct distinct orders. Therefore, my project provided an overview of these order-building projects on their terms that decentres, but does not eliminate, discussions of their relationship to 'China' that has not been undertaken within IR so far. Most importantly, refocusing discussions of order by looking at how competing order-building projects intersect rather than focusing on locating a shared organising logic reveals a greater degree of contestation occurring under the surface. As each case study identifies, the absence of overt challenges did not preclude actors pursuing their own order. Even the varying success of efforts to establish hierarchy generated tensions that required management. Consequently, situating these order-building projects alongside each other highlights new dimensions to this period.

Tokugawa Japan was the most successful actor in maintaining a distinct order-building project in early modern East Asia. Not only did the Tokugawa bakufu not acknowledge the authority of ruling dynasties in China, it also established a distinct hierarchy. *Shinkoku* ideology stressed Japan's status as the 'Land of the Gods' providing a basis to legitimise authority as superior to 'China'. Furthermore, the distance of the Japanese

archipelago from East Asia's mainland allowed their hierarchy to operate on their terms. The Tokugawa order emerged following the chaos of the Sengoku Period and protracted efforts to unify Japan. Here, Tokugawa Ieyasu's efforts to establish order represented an extension of internal practices extended outwards. Ruling shōguns established segmentation through the *sakoku* edicts restricting select foreign actors to four 'gateways' and ensuring the bakufu controlled movement. Doing so extended internal policies including *buke shohatto* and *sankin kotai* limiting daimyō autonomy. Together, this ensured interaction rituals were conducted in-line with Edo's authority claims and normative agenda. The sub-cases of Joseon and Ryukyu highlight the Tokugawa bakufu's success in navigating contradictions with competing orders through performance strategies. While equality with Joseon was recognised in the formal meanings of interaction rituals, Tokugawa control over performances positioned them as subordinates inside Japanese boundaries consistently. Similarly, the simultaneous incorporation of Ryukyu by the Tokugawa and their 'Chinese' counterparts was managed by ensuring contradictions were hidden during performances of interaction rituals.

Joseon Korea was the least successful actor in maintaining a distinct order-building project in early modern East Asia. Despite consistent efforts to establish hierarchy on their terms, its effectiveness declined across this period as neighbours consolidated their own orders. As Neo-Confucian beliefs informed Joseon's worldview, initial alignment with the Ming eventually developed into perceived cultural superiority culminating in identifying itself as the *sojunghwa*. Here, both Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula and the Manchu conquest led Joseon to believe it was the last remaining bastion of civilization. Its rulers sought to convey this through segmentation. The *munin* system was initially effective in using maritime controls to force recognition of their authority claims and normative agenda. Likewise, the *hyanghwain* policy incorporated foreigners within Joseon's boundaries to assert direct control. While their effectiveness declined, these efforts remained consistent throughout this period. The sub-cases of the Ming and Qing alongside Japan identify the increasing limitations facing Joseon's efforts to incorporate neighbours on their terms. Their relationship with both the Ming and Qing dynasty show performance strategies could only ever distance Joseon from the implications of interaction rituals at odds with their order. Similarly, the incorporation of Tsushima was part of wider efforts to incorporate Japanese regional actors at odds with ruling shōguns through interaction rituals conveying Joseon's understanding.

Đại Việt was moderately successful in maintaining a distinct order-building project in early modern East Asia. In contrast to Tokugawa Japan or Joseon Korea, competing polities shared the 'Vietnamese' identity prior to Nguyễn unification in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, conquest represented another departure as expansion eliminated rival polities and incorporated them on 'Vietnamese' terms. While Neo-Confucianism formed the basis of legitimacy for rulers in the north, this adaptation of Chinese beliefs occurred at odds with their efforts to construct order. Consistent use of the term 'emperor' reflected Đại Việt's belief it was a co-equal 'domain of manifest civility' even while recognising the Chinese emperor's suzerainty. Conversely, polities in the south employed Buddhism to legitimise authority as their primary point of contact was Southeast Asia rather than 'China'. Competing polities each employed segmentation simultaneously through maritime controls which limited their effectiveness. Conversely, conquest proved effective in eliminating space for other actors to express authority autonomously and forced recognition of their claims. The sub-cases of the Ming and Qing alongside Cambodia highlight the moderate success of Đại Việt order-building projects. Relations with ruling dynasties in China highlight their disadvantage as interaction rituals imposed by the Ming and Qing undercut efforts to construct order by exploiting the existence of competing Đại Việt polities. Conversely, the incorporation of Cambodia into the Đại Việt order through conquest highlights their effectiveness in imposing terms on Southeast Asia.

To reinforce the importance of segmentation in managing polycentric hierarchy throughout early modern East Asia, I outlined three instances wherein it broke down. These included Hideyoshi's invasions of the Korean peninsula, the Ming-Qing transition, and the arrival of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century. Thus, my project highlighted both continuity and change in managing order. Polycentric hierarchy broke down when the ambitions of East Asian actors could no longer be managed through segmentation. Here, they sought to press their authority claims and normative agenda through force and thereby revise the system on their terms. This occurred due to the loss of ritual efficacy stabilising relations as the context of performances shifted and the nature of participating actors changed lessening their desire for the status quo. While polycentric hierarchy reconstituted itself in the first two instances, it failed to do so in the third. I attribute this to two factors. First, the normative agendas brought by the West did not recognise pre-existing means of legitimising authority as appropriate. Second, the ability of Western powers to penetrate all levels of East Asian society eliminated segmentation as a viable approach to managing order. Although

ritual efficacy declined, segmentation remained the only basis for maintaining relations as technology limited the potential for direct control. Thus, hierarchy became further entrenched and asserted greater control over actors as segmentation no longer became viable.

Contributions

This project contributes to ongoing research into both historical Asian IR alongside wider debates on the management of hierarchical order within the discipline. My most immediate contribution is an empirical account of the other hierarchies in early modern East Asia on their terms. Not only does this expand existing accounts, but it also provides new insights into the operation of hierarchical relationships. I therefore contribute to the following debates. First, my account of polycentric East Asian order furthers efforts to move beyond Sinocentrism. Second, the segmentation of space reconciles competing explanations in the discipline as to how authority was legitimised. Third, I expand accounts of interaction rituals beyond ideal types by identifying their shifting efficacy across time.

Polycentric East Asian order provides a holistic account situating the hierarchies of all East Asian rulers alongside one another. This claim is not without controversy – unlike the parity existing within the mandala system of Southeast Asia, the asymmetry of capabilities between 'Chinese' and other East Asian hierarchies was significant. Unsurprisingly, this leads to pushback around whether the existence of other hierarchies warrants the term 'polycentrism'. Cultural approaches downplay competing hierarchies and emphasise socialisation into shared hierarchical norms.[6] Material approaches highlight domination and how superordinate actor prevent meaningful challenges to their position.[7] Relational approaches emphasise how superordinates employ multi-vocality to legitimise their position on terms understood by subordinates.[8] Nevertheless, my project has demonstrated how interaction rituals established meaning and that their contestation at the micro-level reveal competing order-building projects which monocentric approaches do not fully account for. Contestation was not over status within shared conceptions of hierarchy, but rather how to perform status in hierarchy in the first place. Beyond historical Asian IR, my account of

[6] Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire*; Kang, *East Asia Before the West*; Yongjin Zhang and Barry Buzan, "The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5, no. 1 (2012): 3-36.
[7] Victoria Tin-bor Hui, *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Wang, *Harmony and War*.
[8] Zhang, *Chinese Hegemony*; MacKay, "The nomadic other," 471-491; Lee, *China's Hegemony*; Phillips, *How the East was won*; Zarakol, *Before the West*.

polycentrism speaks to recent depictions of 'complex hierarchy' such as heterarchy or hegemony.[9] Providing an empirical depiction of these formations highlights the tensions wrought by the lack of a singular organising logic. Thus, questions turn to how competing efforts within these formations co-existed indefinitely. As I discuss later, this required the development of new explanations for regional stability.

Introducing the concept of segmentation identifies the important role played by spatial organisation in managing order in this period. This compliments accounts on the role of spatial organisation such as Thongchai Winichakul's *Siam Mapped* in exploring the practices existing in this region before the arrival of Western understandings.[10] In doing so, it reconciles competing accounts as to how authority was legitimised in early modern East Asia. Prevailing accounts identify legitimisation in this period occurring through hierarchical delegation. Increasingly however, accounts stress the autonomous production of authority.[11] In practice, both processes for legitimation occurred simultaneously. This is reflected in East Asia's competing order-building projects. Thus, rather than an 'either-or' approach to the legitimation of authority, I take a 'both-and' explanation. Alongside reconciling these competing understandings, my project explains how competing hierarchies are managed. To explain the endurance of this inside/outside dynamic I establish the segmentation of space. This is captured in the contemporaneous phrase *wài wáng nèi dì* or 'emperor at home, king abroad'. I capture historical East Asian thought and practice around spatial organisation which has only been tangentially explored within IR. Centering maritime controls and restrictions on movement in discussions of segmentation, I show how contradictions were managed as a result. Doing so expands on calls to move beyond hierarchy as the basis for explaining order in the region. For research beyond historical Asian IR, segmentation captures the multi-faceted nature of authority and demonstrates the importance of time and place in explaining contradictory expressions.

My account of interaction rituals in this project brings the contestation around their performance to the forefront. Focus on rituals in IR has highlighted the importance of the meetings between leaders and/or their diplomatic agents whose co-presence establishes the tenor of relationships. Yet accounts focus mainly on formal meanings established by actors

[9] Ikenberry & Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0," 395-421.
[10] Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).
[11] Lee, *China's Hegemony*, 56-78; Choi, "Chinese' hegemony from a Korean *shi* perspective," 348-349; Chia, "Social Positioning and International Order Contestation," 309.

through their performance.[12] Such an approach is reflected in historical Asian IR wherein ongoing performances of rituals are treated as largely consistent in the outcome they produce. Only recently have discussions around differing experiences of performances and the tensions this generates been discussed.[13] Thus, my focus on juxtaposing the formal meanings and subjective understandings of interaction rituals compliments this research. I contextualise their performance and highlight how historical shifts result in the loss of ritual efficacy. While these rituals conveyed a timeless world, my project highlights how their relevance to actors could shift. Furthermore, I capture how the ongoing performance of relationships required ongoing management. Introducing performance strategies shows how actors took the implications of performances seriously and sought to ensure their understandings were conveyed. As such, these capture how underneath the seeming stability of repeated performances underlying tension is locatable in these acts of contestation. Through this, I provide more flexible accounts of rituals capturing a greater range of experiences for participants.

Future Research Avenues

Tensions around conflicting understandings of status and identity continue in the region's current politics. Taiwan's status in the international system today highlight competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas continue to conflict throughout East Asia. On December 7, 1949, the Guomindang retreated to the island of Taiwan following their defeat in the Chinese Civil War. What had been conceived by Chiang Kai-shek as a temporary measure quickly ossified into one of the major Cold War divisions persisting to this very day. Representing the most dangerous 'flashpoint' in the Asia-Pacific, its liminal international status exists at the intersection of the US-led regional order and the ambitions of a rising China.[14] Viewing Taiwan as a 'renegade province', reunification is a central motif in the Chinese Communist Party's legitimacy narratives.[15] As material and ontological security challenges play out, it is easy to dismiss the relevance of an East Asian past wherein such contradictions could be hidden. Indeed, the inside/outside dynamic of

[12] Jorg Kustermans, Ted Svensson, Julia Costa López, Tracey Blasenheim & Alvina Hoffmann, "Ritual and authority in world politics," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 35, no. 1 (2022): 2-30.
[13] Baele and Balzacq, "International rituals," 1-23.
[14] Brendan Taylor, *The Four Flashpoints: How Asia Goes to War* (Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 2018): 133-170.
[15] Christopher Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese nationalism: National identity and status in international society* (London: Routledge, 1997)

segmentation allowing actors to operate in contradiction throughout the early modern period was possible only in the absence of modern technology. Nevertheless, performance strategies continue managing micro-level encounters ensuring particular understandings of actors are conveyed without undermining the status quo. China increasingly policies the language of actors throughout the international system to ensure its claims over Taiwan are acknowledged whether they be international airline carriers or thirteen-time WWE World Heavyweight Champions.[16] For their part, the term 'Chinese Taipei' allows Taiwan to navigate participation in international organisations and sporting events. These examples demonstrate how balancing material and ontological security concerns results in a status quo wherein Taiwan operates like a state in practice despite lacking formal recognition. Through this, we see the challenges facing early modern East Asia continue today.

In this section, I outline three future research avenues I believe deserve greater attention. First, I identify underexplored areas concerning the management of hierarchy at all levels of the international system. Second, I briefly explore how the concept of segmentation can travel beyond early modern East Asia. Third, I outline where research into ritual subjectivity can go next.

Opportunities

Management of hierarchy remains a perennial issue within IR as part of wider discussions on the nature of order. This project engaged with these discussions through a micro-level vantage point offering new paths to explore. The relationship between micro-level encounters of diplomatic agents structuring relations on hierarchical lines and the military, economic, and social prominence of actors within a given system is often at odds. While this project has demonstrated the use of performance strategies in bringing or resisting efforts to align micro-level encounters with the power dynamics between actors, further attention on the motives of diplomatic agents themselves can further our understanding of management. Indeed, this project has only implicitly engaged with the idea that the interests of agents can stand at odds with those of the actors they represent. Indeed, "Individuals cannot help but experience personal motives and feelings, which do not necessarily align with

[16] Ed Bryan, "Taiwan: how airlines are being dragged into China's bitter dispute over the island's sovereignty," *The Conversation*, August 6, 2018, https://theconversation.com/taiwan-how-airlines-are-being-dragged-into-chinas-bitter-dispute-over-the-islands-sovereignty-100932; Vincent Ni, "John Cena 'very sorry' for saying Taiwan is a country," *The Guardian*, May 26, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/26/john-cena-very-sorry-for-saying-taiwan-is-a-country.

national interests but which can substantially influence how those interests are defined and pursued."[17] For example, my own research identifies how relations between Tokugawa Japan and Joseon Korea were restored through the unsanctioned forging of diplomatic correspondence by daimyō Sō Yoshinari.[18] Thus, within the symbolic world in which hierarchy was legitimised it opens question over who is subordinated within interaction rituals– the diplomatic agent themselves or the actor they represent? Indeed, it highlights a need to understand the tools used by hierarchies to ensure micro-level performances remained consistent. Although agents and actors have been treated as synonymous within hierarchy, exploring tensions between the two highlights the complexities of managing such formations.

Transporting segmentation beyond early modern East Asia provides an opportunity to assess the role played by spatial organisation in reconciling authority claims elsewhere. Indeed, tensions associated with rival claims to universal authority recurred throughout history. Medieval Europe's *Zweikaiserproblem* or 'problem of two emperors' also highlights the ontological tension between claims to universal authority in the singular office of 'emperor' and the reality multiple claimants to this title existed.[19] Similarly, the Abbasid Caliphate's decline in the tenth century saw the rival Fatimid Caliphate challenge their claims to universal authority over the Islamic *ummah* in both right and practice.[20] Expansion beyond this period allows segmentation to be further developed in the following ways. Future research can explore the interaction capacity of actors engaged in segmentation in different contexts. Understanding the cohesiveness of relations between actors allows us to assess the strength or weakness of instances of segmentation. Another worthwhile research avenue is expanding discussions of segmentation beyond ruler-to-ruler relations both within early modern East Asia and beyond. IR increasingly questions the 'naturalness' of the state (or equivalent political actor historically) as the main unit of analysis in lieu of other sites of political activity.[21] Indeed, 'durable diversity' existed within the international system as different types of actors interacted.[22] Considering the existence of autonomous rulers both

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[17] Barbara Keys, "The Diplomat's Two Minds: Deconstructing a Foreign Policy Myth," *Diplomatic History* 44, no. 1 (2020): 2.
[18] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 76-78.
[19] Werner Ohnsorge, *Das Zweikaiserproblem im früheren Mittelater: die Bedeutung des byzantinischen Reiches für die Entwicklung der Staatside in Europa* (Hildesheim: A. Lax, 1947).
[20] Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the 6th to the 11th Centuries* (London: Longman, 2004): 307-342.
[21] Fiona B. Adamson, "Spaces of Global Security: Beyond Methodological Nationalism," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 1, no. 2 (2016): 19-35.
[22] Andrew Phillips and JC Sharman, "Explaining Durable Diversity in International Systems: State, Company and Empire in the Indian Ocean," *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2015): 436-448.

regionally and locally throughout history, it raises the question of whether segmentation also reconciled competing authority claims at all levels of the international system.

Subjective understandings of interaction rituals offer new paths to explore how participants experienced their involvement in performances. Throughout this project, I have shown the existence of a juxtaposition between formal meanings and subjective understandings within interaction rituals. Future research can focus on establishing a typology for the different experiences associated with performances and capture how effective interaction rituals are in stabilising relations between actors. A potential avenue on which to establish this typology is the work of Randall Collins whose research on interaction ritual chains establishes a relationship between the efficacy of interaction rituals and the experiences of participating actors. Here, Collins identifies four different outcomes for interaction rituals – successful, forced, empty, and failed.[23] Each represents an ideal-type observable within the dynamics of rituals and better establishes the spectrum of both positive and negative experiences. Furthermore, it allows us to better highlight the specific motives behind participation in interaction rituals. Doing so then allows us to identify how contextual shifts impact the performance and outcome of interaction rituals. Rather than acceptance or rejection of interaction rituals, it brings experiences hidden under the surface to the fore. Consequently, since the ritual framework of analysis operate across time, these new paths can be explored within historical Asian IR and beyond.

Conclusion

While firmly embedded within the historical Asian experience, my project speaks to the universal challenges arising from actors struggling to reconcile their competing interests within the international system. Underneath even the seeming stability of early modern East Asia's hierarchical order we find lingering animosities and disagreements as actors held competing visions of order and a determination to actualise these in practice. The framing of 'emperor at home, king abroad' provided this project with the impetus to not seek consensus in how order operated but rather how their conflicting understandings could operate at the same time. The segmentation of space highlights that competing authority claims and diverging normative agendas of actors need not converge. Ongoing management whether in separating hierarchies in distinct spaces or employing performance strategies to alter the

[23] Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 50-53.

meaning of interaction rituals show tensions enduring without resolution. Thus, a formation like polycentric hierarchy can endure over the long-term despite inherent contradictions between its component parts. As a result, we can complement predominantly Sinocentric accounts of the region through a framework that also includes the Tokugawa, Joseon, and Đại Việt order-building projects. For while the Qianlong Emperor was able to command East Asia and beyond to participate in the celebration of his birthday, even he could not command their genuine belief in his pretensions. Envoys carried home their own understandings which informed their vision of order alone.

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