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**RECORD OF REPRIMANDS AND ADMONITIONS (Chingbirok)**

**by Yu Songnyong translated by Wilbur D. Bacon**

**PREFACE**

What is the Record of Reprimands and Admonitions (Chingbirok懲毖錄)? It is a record of what happened after the Japanese invasion began. But events which took place before the invasion are occasionally recorded in order to explain the affair from the beginning.

Alas! Imjin 壬辰 (1592) was indeed a year of calamities and misery. In no more than ten days, the three capitals were lost to the enemy,1 the eight provinces collapsed,2 the King fled from the capital and became a refugee. Only the aid of Heaven enabled us to survive to this day. Another reason is that the ancestors of the King were humane and beneficent thereby firmly binding themselves to the people. Also, the idea of loyalty to China had not been abandoned. As the King had been loyal in his duties toward his suzerain,3 the Emperor of China was greatly moved, and sent many soldiers to help us. It this had not been done, the consequences would have been perilous indeed

As the *Book of Odes* (Shih-ching 詩經) says: “I have been chastised,and I will guard against future calamities.”4 This is the reason for writing the Chingbirok. An unworthy person like me, who received an important government position at a time of peregrination and lawlessness,but was unable to uphold the tottering and support the falling, cannot expiate his crime even by death. That I can still gaze about me and draw breath amidst the fields,prolonging my life, is this not leniency?

Once anxiety and apprehension somewhat abated, I constantly thought about the events of former days, and there has never been a moment when I did not feel unbearable shame. Therefore,during tnis time of leisure, I will narrate in a rough fashion what I heard ana saw, and [page 10] summarize in a few words what happened between the years of Imjin (1592) and Musul 戊戌 (1598). To accomplish this purpose, I am attaching Changgye 狀啓,5 memorials to the King, cha ja 疏箚, 6 muni 文移,7 and miscellaneous documents. Even if these are not of value, as they are all records of those days, they cannot be disregraded.

On one hand, by dwelling amidst these fields, I constantly show compliance with my vows of loyalty, and on the other hand, by writing this, I, a foolish minister, repay the debt I owe my country for not bringing criminal charges against me.

**PART I**

During the Pyongsul 丙戌 year (1587) of the Wan-li 萬暦 reign period,8 the Japanese Ambassador, Tachibana [Yuya] Yasuhiro 橘 [袖 谷] 康廣9 came to this country with a letter from that country’s King, Taira [Toyotomi] Hideyoshi 平 [豊臣] 秀吉.10 Originally,the King of Japan was a Minamoto源11 who established his country12 in the early part of the Hung-wu 洪武 reign period13 and cultivated good neighborly relations with us which lasted about two-hundred years.

At first, our country also occasionally sent envoys to Japan to carry out ceremonies appropriate to times of good fortune and mourning. One of those who travelled back and forth as an Envoy14 was Sin Sukchu 申叔舟.15 Later, when Sukchu was dying, King Songjong 成宗 (1457-69- 94) asked him if there was anything he wished to say. Sukchu replied, “What I want is for my country never to sever peaceful relations with Japan. Songjong was moved by these words and ordered First Counselor16 Yi Hyongwon 李亨元 and Envoy Kim Hun 金訴 to foster peaceful relations with Japan. They went to Tsushima Island 對馬島,17 but the envoys were so filled with apprehension by the wind and waves that they became ill. They wrote a letter to the King reporting these circumstances. Songjong ordered them to send the letters and presents they were carrying to the Lord of [Tsushima] Island18 and return to Korea. After that we did not again send envoys to Japan. Whenever envoys arrived from that country, they were welcomed with proper [page 11] ceremonies and that was all.

Then Taira [Toyotomi] Hideyoshi19 replaced Minamoto20 as King. Some say concerning Hideyoshi, “He was Chinese. He crossed the water, entered Japan, and earned his living carrying firewood on his back. One day the king while on an outing, met him on the roadway, and as he was an unusual man, received him into his company of soldiers. Courageous and expert at fighting, he accumulated meritorious deeds and became a great officer. As a result, he became powerful. At last he drove out Minamoto and took over his position.” Others say, “Minamoto was assassinated by another man, then Hideyoshi killed that man and seized control of the country.”21 By using military force,he pacified the territory within all the islands, unified the sixty-six provinces into one country, and then turned his thoughts to foreign conquests.

Then he said, “We frequently send envoys to Korea, but Korean envoys don’t come here. This indicates that they have contempt for us.” Therefore Ambassador Yasuhiro came and demanded an exchange of envoys. The contents of the letter he brought were very arrogant ; for example, it had the wording, “Now the realm has come wholly into the grasp of me22 alone.” Since the death of Minamoto, already ten years or so, Japanese from all the islands occasionally came to our country and returned, but fearing the strict regulations, didn’t divulge this fact, so the Korean Court didn’t know about Minamoto’s death.23

Yasuhiro’s age was a little over fifty, his physique was gigantic, and his hair and beard were half white. Whenever he arrived at an inn or relay station,24 he insisted that he be lodged in the best room, and his behavior was imperious. This was very different from the usual behavior of Japanese envoys, and people were exceedingly outraged.

Traditionally men from the counties and towns along the route usually greeted Japanese envoys by coming to the road and holding spears in order to demonstrate the military power of Korea. As Yasuhiro passed through Indong 仁同, he glanced at the men holding spears and said laughing, “The staffs of your spears are short indeed!” When he arrived at Sangju 尙州,25 Prefect26 Song Ungdong 宋應洞 arranged a performance of ki [saeng] 妓生 (female entertainers) and music to welcome him. When Yasuhiro saw that Ungdong was withered and hoary, the Ambassador said through his interpreter, “Because old men have spent many years on the battlefield,their hair and beards become [page 12] completely white. The Prefect spends his time with music and kisaeng and is therefore never sad. And yet his hair is completely white. Why is that?”Most likely Yasuhiro was making fun of him.

When Yasuhiro arrived in Seoul, the Minister of the Board of Rites gave a banquet for him. When everyone had become tipsy from rice wine, Yasuhiro scattered pepper corns on top of the mats. The kisaeng and musicians fought each other to grab them, and there was no longer respect for rank. As Yasuhiro returned to his quarters, he said to his interpreter, with a sigh, “Your country will definitely be destroyed. With public order already broken down, how can it expect not to be destroyed?”

When Yasuhiro returned to Japan, the King of Korea only sent with him a reply to Hideyoshi’s letter, and would not permit envoys to be sent on the pretext that sea passages were bewildering and obscure. When Yasuhiro returned with this information, Hideyoshi was very angry and executed Yasuhiro and his entire family. It is probable that Yasuhiro, with his elder brother Yasutoshi 康年 came to visit our country at the time of Minamoto and received official positions. It is said that Hideyoshi, hearing about this, suspected Yasuhiro of being a supporter of our country’s position, and for this reason had him killed.

Then Ambassador Taira [So] Yoshitomo 平[宗]義智 came to Korea. After Hideyoshi had Tachibana [Yuya] Yasuhiro killed, he ordered Yoshitomo to come and demand that envoys be sent to Japan. Yoshitomo was the son-in-law of Taira [Konishi] Yukinaga 平[小西]行長,General of the Japanese Army, and the trusted retainer of Hideyoshi. The Governor of Tsuhima Island, S5 Morinaga 宗盛長,who had been governor several generations previously, had acknowledged the subordination of Tsushima to our country. But now Hideyoshi deposed the So family and replaced them with Ambassador Yoshitomo as Lord of the Island.27

Hideyoshi, believing that our message stating we were unfamiliar with the sea passage was only an excuse for not sending envoys, falsely said, “As Yoshitomo is the son of the Lord of the Island,he is acquainted with the sea passage and your envoys can travel with him.” He felt we could not conveniently refuse and, in addition,[Yoshitomo] could spy out what was false and true concerning our country. Taira no [Yanagawa] Shigenobu 平 [柳川]調信, the bonze Genso玄蘇,and others accompanied him. [page 13]

Yoshitomo was young and fierce. rhe other Japanese all feared him. Prostrating themselves, they crawled before him, not daring to gaze upward. He stayed for a long time in the Eastern Peace Hall (Tongp’yonggwan 東平館) while the demand that our envoys accompany him to Japan was discussea by the Court, which disagreed as to what should be done.

Several years previously, Japanese [pirates] attacked Sonchuk Island 損竹島 in Cholla Province; killed Frontier General Yi T’aewon 李太源 and carried off some of the inhabitants as prisoners. Someone said, “A fellow Sal Paedong 沙乙背同 (Sa’ul Paedong28) living in the frontier areas, betrayed his country, went to Japan, and guided the Japanese during this attack.” This news angered the Court. Thereupon another person said “We ought to order the Japanese to repatriate all deserters Afterwards we will discuss the sending of envoys. This will demonstrate whether or not they are sincere.” This proposal was conveyed to our guests in the reception hall for envoys. Yoshitomo said, “That is no problem.” Then he sent Taira no [Yanagawa] Shigenobu back to his country with this news.

In a short time, they seized about ten of our people who were in Japan and brought them to Korea. His Majesty came to the Hall of Humane Government (Injongjon 仁政殿)29 and, amidst a large, imposing array of soldiers, Sal Paedong and the others were brought into the courtyard bound with with ropes, questioned concerning their crimes, and then beheaded outside the city walls. Yoshitomo was then presented one of the King’s horses.

An audience was then granted to the Japanese Ambassador and his suite, and a banquest was held for them. Yoshitomo, Genso,and the others all entered the hall in order of rank and toasted the King. At that time I was Minister of the Board of Rites, and the banquet for the Japanese Ambassador was held at the Board.

But the decision concerning the sending of envoys had not been made and much time had passed. I, in my capacity as [concurrent] Grand Master (Taejehak 大提學) [of the office of Royal Decrees Yemun’gwan 藝文館], was responsible for preparing our reply to the Japanese letter. I memorialized the throne that a decision should be made quickly in order that seeds of discord would not be sown between the two countries. The next day the King discussed this matter with various officials and [page 14] they proposed, “We would not be in error if we repayed in kind the sending of envoys by Japan. Our envoys could return with a glimpse of conditions in that country.” This settled the dispute at Court at last and the King ordered that envoys be selected. The high-ranking officials took Assistant Office Chief (Chomji 僉知) of the Privy Council (Chungch ubu 中樞府), Hwang Yun’gil 黃允吉,and Deputy Headmaster of the National Academy (Sasong 司成), Kim Songil 金誠一,as Ambassador and Deputy Ambassador. Ho Song 許筬,Recorder (Chdn jok 典籍) of the National Academy,was made Courrier.

In the third month of 1590 they finally departed in company with Yoshitomo and the others. At that time Yoshitomo presented the King with two peacocks, muskets, spears, swords, and other gifts. The King ordered that the peacocks be sent to the islands in the south, and that the muskets be placed in the Arsenal (Kun’gisi 軍器寺). This was the first time there were muskets in our country.

In the spring of 1591, the Embassy, including Hwang Yun’gil, Kim Songil and others returned from Japan, and the Japanese Taira no [Yanagawa] Shigenobu and Genso accompanied them. Prior to this, on the 4th month of the previous year, Yun’gil’s party reached Pusan and boarded a boat for Tsushima Island,where they stayed for one month. From Tsusima they went again by water about 40 li 里 or so and arrived at Iki Island—岐[査岐]30 Then they passed through Hakata 博多, Nagato 長門31 and Nagoya 浪古耶 [那古耶] and finally arrived in the Japanese capital on the 22nd day of the 7th month. Probably the Japanese took them by a winding route and stayed for awhile at various places so that they wouldn’t arrive at the capital for several months.

When they were in Tsushima, Taira [So] Yoshitomo invited the envoys to attend a banquest in a temple on the mountainside. After the envoys arrived and were seated, Yoshitomo entered the gate riding in a sedan chair which he got out of when he arrived at the stairway.32 Kim Songil angrily said, “Tsushima is a vassal of our country. We envoys have brought with us the decrees of the King. How dare you insult us like this? I will not accept this banquet.” Thereupon he arose and departed. Ho Song and the others left. Yoshitomo put the blame on the sedan chair bearers, had them killed, and presented their heads to our envoys to expiate his error. After this, the Japanese held Songil in awe, welcomed him with proper ceremonies, and got off their horses when they saw him approaching.

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When the envoys arrived at the Japanese capital, they were lodged in a large Buddhist temple.33 Taira [Toyotomi] Hideyoshi had just gone to attack the Eastern Mountain Region,34 and they were kept waiting for several months. When Hideyoshi returned, he was given responsibility for making repairs to the palace and therefore was unable to receive our official letter. The envoys had to wait in their lodgings about five months before they were at last able to deliver the King’s decree.

That country reveres an Emperor, and from Hideyoshi on down, all the ministers show respect for him [the Emperor]. Inside his country, Hideyoshi is not called “King”,but is called Kampaku 關白 or Hakurik-d 博陸侯, The term Kampaku comes from a saying of Huo Kuang 霍光,35 “In all matters, everyone must first of all ‘inform one’s superiors’ (kampaku) .

Our envoys were then received by Hideyoshi. They were permitted to enter the palace riding their sedan chairs with flutes and horns preceding them. They ascended into the hall and performed the proper ceremonies. In appearance, Hideyoshi was short and common looking, the color of his face was dark black, and nothing marked him as unusual except that they say if he opened his eyes slightly, his eyeballs gleamed and a ray of light shown upon people. He was seated on a bare, three-tiered mat and was wearing a gauze hat and plack robe. All the ministers and others were seated in rows. They ushered in our envoys and conducted them to their seats. They had not prepared any utensils for a banquet. In front was a lone table, in the middle of which was one plate of cooked pastries. Rice wine was passed around in a pottery bowL The wine was unrefined. The ceremonies were extremely simple; the wine bowl was passed around that was all36. There was no opportunity to do obeisance or to propose toasts.

Hideyoshi then suddenly arose and went into the interior part of the buildings while all the people who were seated did not move. Suddenly a man wearing ordinary clothes and carrying a child. came out from within and walked back and forth in the hall, Soon they perceived that the man was Hideyoshi. Those in attendance only bowed. A little later, he stepped down to one of the exterior columns, ordered our musicians to play several pieces of music, and listened to it.

Then the baby urinated upon his clothes. Hideyoshi, laughing, called for an attendant. A Japanese woman’s voice replied and she came [page 16] running out. He gave her the child and changed into other clothes. All this was done audaciously as he pleased as though no one else were around. Our envoys then departed and did not see Hideyoshi again. He presented the Ambassador and Deputy Ambassador with 400 ryo兩37 of silver,and the Courrier,the interpreters, and those below them other gifts in accordance with their rank.

Our envoys were about to return to Korea. As there had been insufficient time to prepare a reply to our letter, the envoys were ordered to leave without it. Songil said, “I am an envoy who came here bringing an official letter. If there is no reply, it is my duty to sacrifice my life as though it were a thing without value.”Yun’gil, fearing that he would be detained, hurriedly departed for Sakai界,38 where he waited for Songil at the seashore.

The reply came at last, but the contents were outrageously arrogant, contrary to Songil’s expectations. He refused to accept it, sent it back several times for revision, and then took it and departed. Through everywhere he passed, many Japanese offered him gifts, but he refused to accept them.

As soon as Yun’gil arrived at Pusan and disembarked, he sent a mounted courier to report to the King on the facts of the case. He stated that the horrors of war were a certainty. When they reported in person to the King, he questioned them concerning what they had seen. Yun’gil’s reply was the same as his previous statement. Songil, however, said, “I did not see any indications of that.” The reason he said this was that he felt it was not proper for Yun’gil to disturb men’s minds. Thereupon one faction39 supported Yun’gils opinion, the other that of Songil.

I asked Songil, “Although what you said does not agree with what Ambassador Hwang [Yun,gil] said, what alternative is there to war?”

He replied, “I also feel that there is no alternative, as in the end the Japanese will unleash war. But Hwang’s words were too pessimistic, and those inside and outside the court will become bewildered and lose their self-control. That is the reason why I said what I did.”

The contents of the Japanese letter were that they intended to send troops through Korea to China. I said that we ought to prepare a memorial to inform the Celestial Court. The Prime Minister said concerning this suggestion, “I am afraid that,unless we conceal the fact, the Imperial Court will consider it was a criminal act for us to have [page 17] carried out an exchange of envoys with Japan on our own volition.”

I said, “In some situations there can be such exchanges with neighboring countries when there are countries with which such exchanges are unavoidable. In the Cheng-hua 成化 reign period (1465—1487) [of Ming], Japan requested the establishment of tributary relations with China through the good offices of Korea. Thereupon we informed the Chinese court of the true circumstances. The Celestial Court sent down an Imperial Rescript in reply. This situation has occurred previously, not only today. If we now conceal this and do not inform the Emperor, we will not be acting in accordance with our vows of loyalty. Indeed, if those robbers40 really plan to invade China, others may inform the Emperor. Then the Celestial Court will unjustly suspect that we have concealed this business because we are in accord with the Japanese. In that case it cannot be supposed that the ‘crime’ will be ended with the exchange of envoys.” As many at Court agreed with my opinion, Kim Ungnam 金應南 and others were quickly dispatched to inform [the Chinese].

At that time, some Fukienese, including Hsu I-hou 許儀後 and Shen Ch’en 申陳,who were captives in Japan, secretly sent word to China of the situation in Japan. Also, Prince Shonei 尙寧 of the Ryukyu Kingdom again and again sent envoys with information42. Only our envoys did not arrive. The Celestial Court suspected that we were in league with the Japanese and there were many confused arguments. Prime Minister Hsii Kuo 許國,who had been an Ambassador to Korea, alone said,”Korea has remained loyal to sadae 事大.43 It cannot be in agreement with the rebellious spirit of the Japanese. Just wait awhile.” After a long time, Ungnam and the others arrived and presented our memorial.44 Duke Hsu was very happy, and it is said that the arguments at Court at last ended with suspicion dispersed.

The King, worried about the Japanese, selected ministers well versed in frontier affairs to inspect the three southern provinces in order to prepare for their defense. The following were appointed Inspector-Generals (Kamsa 監司)45: Kim Su 金晬 for Kyongsang [Province]; Yi Kwang 李洗 for Cholla [Province]; and Yun Sŏn-gak 尹先覺 for Ch’ung-ch’ong [Province]. They were ordered to prepare weapons and repair fortresses and reservoirs.46 In Kyongsang Province,a great many fortresses were either newly constructed or rebuilt at Y5ngch,on 永川, [page 18] Ch’ongdo 淸道,S amga 三嘉, Taegu 大邱, Songju 星州, Pusan 釜山, Tongnae 東萊, Chinju 晋州, Andong 安東, Sangju 尙州, and the Army Command Posts of the Right and the Left.

At that time we had been at peace for many years and were accustomed to both internal and external tranquility. The people therefore disliked this forced labor. Murmurs of discontent filled the streets. In the same year, Yi No 李魯, a contemporary of mine from Hapch, on 陕川 [Kyong-sang Province] and Recorder (Chon jok) of the National Academy, sent me a letter in which he said that it was not a good plan to build fortresses. He also said, “In front of Samga is [the stream] Chongjin 淸津, which blocks the way. Can the Japanese fly across? Why is the labor of the people used wastefully? Moreover, if 10,000 li of ocean cannot hold back the Japanese, then to wish that only one piece of sash-like water will be impassible to the Japanese is indeed ridiculous.” At that time other people argued in the same way. The Office of Special Counselors (Hong-mun‘gwan 弘文館) sent letters to the King with the same arguments.

In the two southern provinces, where construction was underway, proper locations could not be obtained for all the fortresses. Also, it was deemed important to build them large enough to accomodate many people. For example, Chinju fortress originally depended for its defense on the steepness of its location. At this time it was considered too small and was moved eastward down to the plain. Later, because of this, the invaders were able to enter the fortress and it did not provide security. Usually fortresses which were strong and small were held in esteem, but at that time people were alarmed if they were not spacious.

We proceeded with the establishment of military government and the selection of generals, of whom not one in a hundred knew the methods of drilling soldiers. That is why we were defeated.

Yi Sunsin 李舜臣, who was Magistrate of Chongup Prefecture 井邑縣 [in Cholla Province], was selected to become the Navy Commander of Left Cholla Province.47 Sunsin was courageous, resourceful, and an excellent horseman and archer. Previously, when he was Centurion (Manho 萬戶,4b) of Chosan 造山 [in Hamgyong Province], there were many troubles along the northern frontier. Sunsin devised a plan by which he trapped the Jurched named Ulginae 乙其及. He sent him bound to the Army Headquarters, where he was beheaded. As a result,the troubles with the barbarians quieted down. [page 19]

Chief of the Border Patrol (Sunchalsa 巡察使,2b) Chong Onsin 鄭彥信 ordered Sunsin to guard the military farms at Noktun Island 鹿屯島. One day there was a thick fog. The soldiers all went out to harvest rice. Inside the stockade, however, there remained about ten men. Suddenly four bands of enemy horsemen appeared. Sunsin closed the stockade gate and prepared fire arrows. Then, he showered the enemy with arrows from inside the stockade and more than ten fell off their horses. The enemy was terrified and retreated on the run. Sunsin opened the gate, mounted his horse,gave a great battle cry,and pursued them by himself. The enemy was badly defeated and all that they had seized as plunder was recovered.

But as there was no one to recommend him at Court, Sunsin was not selected for advancement in rank for more than ten years, when at last he as made Magistrate of Chongup Prefecture (1585).

At that time, as we had been informed of the Japanese plans, every day things became more tense. The King ordered that the [officials of] the Office of Frontier Defense (Pibyonsa 備邊司) each should recommend clever men worthy of serving as generals. I recommended Sunsin. He was finally rescued from Chongup Precture and became an Admiral. Others were distrustful of such a rapid rise in station.

At that time, among the generals at Court, only Sin ip 申砬 (1546-92) and Yi II 李鐘 (1538-1601) were very famous. Army Commander of Right Kyongsang Province Cho Taegon 曹大坤 was old in years and cowardly. Many people were afraid that he would not be able to distinguish himself in battle.

While seated where the lecture on classics is given, I requested that II replace Taegon. The Minister of the Board of War,Hong Yosun 洪汝諄, said, “We need a well-known general at Seoul. II cannot be sent. Repeating the request,I replied, “In all things, previous preparations are most valuable. However, the ability to lead troops against the enemy can not, of course, be quickly discerned. If this were an incident of one morning, in the final analysis it would be unsutiable to send II. Others would be sent. But when morning becomes a whole day, it perhaps would be advantageous to make proper preparations in anticipation of the event. But on the contrary, visiting generals gallop down to the provinces on the spur of the moment. They are acquainted neither with conditions in the provinces where they are sent nor the valor or timidity of the soldiers there. They shun the arts of war. We will certainly regret this  [page 20] later.” There was no reply.

I again set out as [official] of the Office of Frontier Defense. After listening to the opinions of many people, I recommended in a memorial to the King that we revive the system of Local Command Posts (Chin gwan 鎭管) established by his ancestors. Very briefly, it said, “In the early days of the Kingdom, provincial soldiers were attached to Local Command Posts. In case of need, the towns belonging to the Local Command Posts each in turn awaited the orders of the Commanding General. For example, if we were speaking of Kyongsang Province, then Kimae 金海, Taegu, Sangu, Kyongju 慶州, Andong and Chinju would become the six Local Command Posts. If there were an enemy attack, even if the soldiers of one post were wiped out, the other posts would in turn deal with the attack and maintain a firm defense. They would not all be driven away and destroyed at the same time.

After the Ulmyo Incident (1555),48 Kim Sumun 金秀文 was in Cholla Province. He first reformed the system of assigning troops. He broke down the province into townships, and dispersed and attached [their troops] to the Commander of Guarding the Frontier, Commander of Defense, General for Auxiliary Defense, Marshal of the Capital, and Commanders of the Provincial Army and Navy. This is said to have resulted in a ‘strategy for Victory.’ All the other provinces imitated these arrangements.

“At the present time, if we only revive the name ‘Local Command Posts,’ that, in truth, will not be itself bring the posts together for mutual support. When once a crisis arises, then of necessity generals must be moved in from far and near. If there are no generals,the soldiers first assemble amidst the fields to await the generals and marshals from 1,000 li away. If the generals do not arrive on time,and the enemy’s advance guard approaches, then the soldiers’ hearts are filled with dread, and in truth they will necessarily be dispersed. If a great crowd of them once scatters, it will be difficult to bring them together again. If the generals and marshals arrive at this time,who will they lead into battle?

“How can this be compared with the system of the Local Command Posts set up by the King’s ancestors? In peacetime it is easy to train soldiers. When there are incidents, one will be able to gather [the soldiers]; also as they will mutually respond [to messages] from everywhere, and will mutually rely on those close at hand and far away, [page 21] they will not collapse and flee, even at the occurrence of a crisis.”

Kim Su 金晬,who served his native province of Kyongsang as Inspector-General, proceeded to end the discussion saying, “That plan for victory was used a long time ago. Such an abrupt change [now] is impossible.”

In the spring of 1592, Sin Ip and Yi II were sent out separately to inspect preparations along the frontiers. II went to Ch’ungchong Province and Cholla Province, while Ip went to Kyonggi Province and Hwanghae Province. Both returned after a month had passed. What they inspected was only bows, arrows,spears, and swords. They avoided setting down in writing a plan for each county and township. Nor was there any plan to make preparations for a long drawn-out defense.

Ip as usual gained a reputation for being cruel. Everywhere he had people killed to display his authority and the provincial magistrates were terrified. To control the people and govern the province, he set forth with extremely luxurious luggage. Even a trip by a high-ranking minister could not be compared with his. Then he was ordered to return and on the first day of the fourth month Ip came to see me in my private resideance.

I asked him, “Sooner or later there will be a war, and since you are responsible for military affairs, what do you think about the power of the enemy today? Is he strong or weak?”

Ip treated this question extremely lightly and appeared completely free from anxiety.

I said, “That is not the right attitude. Formerly the Japanese depended on short weapons alone, but now they are joined with muskets which are effective at a distance. We can’t treat the affair lightly.”

Ip hastily said, “Even if they have muskets, they can’t hit anyone with them.”

[page 22]

**NOTES**

1. Seoul, Kaesong and P’yongyang according to the glossary of the Korean translation. The capture of these three cities was accomplished within two months and one week. The caputre of the three capitals of Kyongju, Seoul and Kaesong took from May 22 to July 11, closer to the ten days stated in the text.

2. Hamyong, P’yongan, Hwanghae, Kangwon, Kyonggi, Ch’ungch’ong, Cholla,and Kyongsang Provinces.

3. Korea had accepted Chinese suzerainty from as far back as the T’ang Dynasty. Early in the Yi Dynasty, Korea made itself a tributary of the Ming Dynasty and had carried out its duties as a tributary state for 200 years. The Korean for this relationship was sadae 事大,to “serve the great”.

4. The Book of Odes (Shih-ching 詩經),Chinese text, transcription and translation by Bernhard Karlgren (Stockholm: The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, 1950), 248-49. .

5. changgye- orders received by Inspector-Generals (Kamsa監司) from the King or reports sent to the King by local officials.

6. ch’aja-written opinions in the prescribed form.

7. The text has muni 文移,an inversion of the characters for imun 移文,which were written documents sent to and from people rougnly equivalent in rank.

8. The Wan-li reign period of Ming China was from 1573 to 1620.

9. He was in the employ of the Lord of Tsushima. His clan name was Tachibana ; his family surname Yuya. Koreans often referred to Japanese by their clan names rather than family surnames. In this translation,if clan names are used for Japanese,they will be followed by the family surname in parenthesis.

10. Hideyoshi’s final family name was Toyotomi. It was a custom of many military men to try to show descent from either a Taira or a Minamoto.

II. Yu is actually talking about the Ashikagas, a branch of the Minamoto family. Two of the Ashikaga shoguns accepted the title “king” from Ming emperors, the only time this title was used in Japan. Yu seems to have been unfamiliar with the title shogun(which was not used by Hideyoshi).

12. Yu uses the Sino-Korean expression for setting up a new dynasty. It does not correctly describe the Japanese situation.

13. The Hung-wu reign period, the first in the Ming Dynasty, was from 1368 [page23]

to 1398. The rule of the Ashikagas was confirmed in 1392, when the struggle between the Northern and Southern courts was resolved.

14. Sojang 書狀,or Sojanggwan 書狀官 is a title for envoys to foreign countries.

15. Sin Sukchu, 1417-1475, was an official who first served under King Sejong.

16. A post in the Office of Special Counselors (Hongmun’gwan 弘文館), Pujehak 副提學,senior third rank.

17. Called Taemado in Korean. It is about 60 miles from Pusan and is easily visible from there on a clear day.

18. The ruler of Tsushima was called Shu 主 or Lord. For several centuries he played an important role in Korean-Japanese relations.

19. Hideyoshi’s dates were 1536-98. He was a follower of Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 who completed the reunification of Japan and became its military ruler under the titles Kampaku 關白 and Taiko 太閣.

20. Actually not a Minamoto,but Oda Nobunaga.

21. This is the correct version. Hideyoshi was not Chinese,but he was poor in his youth and he did work his way up in Nobunaga’s service through his own ability.

22. He used the Chinese character for “me” (J,chin 朕), which was reserved for use by the Chinese Emperor.

23. The text is unclear as to whether the Japanese did not divulge the fact that Oda Nobunaga had died, or whether the local Korean officials did not tell the court what they had learned because of regulations against permitting Japanese to enter Korea.

24. The government maintained a series of relay stations to facilitate internal communication.

25. This large town in Kyongsang Province was later the site of one of the early Korean defeats- If was on the most direct route between Pusan and Seoul.

26. Moksa 牧使-a local official of senior tnird rank (3a).

27. It appears that Yoshitomo was the adopted son of his predecessor.

28. From the Chinese characters for Sal Paedong, he was probably a man of low birth,reputedly a tanner from Cholla Province.

29. The audience hall of the Kyongbok Palace 景福宮 in Seoul. It was burned down during the invasion.

30. An island between Kyushu and Tsushima.

31. Hakata is in Kyushu,a port facing the Korean straits ； Nagato is the western tip of Honshu ； and Nagoya is north, in central Honshu.

32. Korean court etiquette required that a person inferior in rank get out of his sedan chair in front of the gate of the person he was visiting.

33. The Daitoku-ji 大德寺 in Kyoto.

34. The Kanto 關東 area. Actually he was laying seige to the Hojo’s 北條 castle in Odawara 小田原. This was his last internal battle. [page 24]

35. A high official during the Later Han Dynasty (25-220) in China.

36. At even an ordinary Korean banquet, the exchange of winecups is done ceremoniously and at great length.

37. The ryo was a unit used for gold and silver currency. A ryo of silver was equivalent to approximately thirty-six ounces.

38. A seaport south of Osaka which was a prominent trading center in the 15th century.

39. Korean politics after 1575 was characterized by especially acrimonious factional strife. The party of the ‘‘Eastern men” (Tongin 東人) supported Songil’s point of view; that of the “Western men” (Soin 西人) Yun’gil’s viewpoint. Yu Songyong himself was a member of the party of “Eastern men”, which split just before the Imjin war into “Northern55 and “Southern’’ parties.

40. A pejorative term for the Japanese. Yu also frequently uses the expression “dwarfs” (wae 侯) for the Japanese.

41. The Ryukyu islands were an independent kingdom at this time, though usually paying tribute to China, and sometimes concurrently to Japan as well.

42. Hideyoshi had sent a letter to tne Ryukyu Kingdom informing the Prince of his intention of invading China.

43. See footnote 3.

44. The Korean messenger was not sent until nine months after the arrival of the letter from Hideyoshi.

45. Kamsa was an alternate title for Kwanch’ alsa 觀’察 使 or Governor of each province. The title kamsa emphasizes the military supervisory functions of the Governor.

46. Griffis in Corea, The Hermit Nation, relying on Japanese sources, said that the Koreans repaired castles and moats. Korean fortifications were walled towns and mountain fortresses and in no way ressembled Japanese castles. I have never seen a moat in Korea. The character 池 here must mean reserviors in which to store water to supply the needs of the defenders of the fortresses. William Elliot Griffis,Corea, The Hermit Nation, 7th edition (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons., 1904), 98.

47. For defense purposes,Kyongsang Province and Cholla Province were divided into Right and Left. Kyongsang Province had Right and Left military and naval commanders,and Cholla Province had Right add Left naval commanders, but only one province-wide military commander. Military and naval commanders were subordinate to the Provincial Governor.

48. The Ulmyo 乙卯 Incident refers to a large-scale Japanese pirate attack against ports in southern Korea in 1555.