

Prioritizing the Ruler-Subject Relationship: *How the Yeonam Group Viewed the Han Chinese under Qing China*

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Abstract

This paper will show how the Yeonam Group's perception of the Han Chinese influenced the development of Northern Learning. Previous studies have noted this influence but did not adequately examine its cause. Conservative intellectuals in Joseon regarded the Qing and its subjects as barbaric, even repugnant. The queue hairstyle which the Qing insisted every adult male wear became a focal point for this disdain. The Yeonam Group also made the queue a focal point, but rather than seeing it as shameful, they tried to view it as an indication that the Han Chinese were acting in accordance with Confucian virtues, foremost of which was the loyalty a subject owed his sovereign. The Yeonam Group believed the Qing to be a worthy inheritor of the Mandate of Heaven and that the queue could be seen as a legitimate institution of the new dynasty. This belief did not cause them to abandon the Ming. By focusing on loyalty, the Yeonam Group found a Confucian virtue that allowed them to accept the advances made by the Qing without forsaking their fidelity to the Ming.

Keywords: Joseon, Yeonam Group, Northern Learning, Han Chinese, Ming loyalism, Mandate of Heaven

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Introduction

The Manchu conquest of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) was cataclysmic for the ruling elites of the Joseon period (1392–1910). Since Joseon's founding, they had looked to Ming China as a font of culture and civilization. It was unthinkable to them that a so-called barbarian tribe, the Manchus, had conquered such a beacon of civilization. In the aftermath, Joseon elites seemingly submitted to the reality that China was now under Manchu rule; inwardly, however, they maintained their loyalty to the defunct Ming dynasty and felt obligated to preserve and carry on Chinese culture as it had existed under the Ming. Through these actions, they endeavored to maintain a cultural distance from the Qing dynasty while protecting Joseon's Confucian civilization (S. S. Cho 2009, 80–84).

This belief that Joseon was now the steward of Confucian civilization was fervently held by a majority of the Noron faction, the most powerful political group in eighteenth-century Joseon (Jung 1998, 66–99). Feeling that Joseon was now the most civilized country, they regarded Qing China as an uncivilized state and rejected its cultural and economic accomplishments. This type of thinking formed the mainstream political ideology among Joseon ruling elites.

However, not everyone shared this ideology. Although they were literati, the members of the Yeonam 燕巖 Group were representative of intellectuals who criticized this view of Qing China.¹ Their views would shape Northern

1. Bak Ji-won 朴趾源 (1737–1805), Hong Dae-yong 洪大容 (1731–1783), Bak Je-ga 朴齊家 (1750–1805), Yi Deok-mu 李德懋 (1741–1793), Yu Deuk-gong 柳得恭 (1748–1807), Seong Dae-jung 成大中 (1732–1809), and Yi Hui-gyeong 李喜經 (1745–1805?) were the main members of this group. Although Bak Ji-won's pen name, "Yeonam," is used to identify this group of associates, this is of modern coinage and not used during their lifetimes (Yoo 1995; Oh 2003). Yoo Bong-hak (Yoo 1995, 18–19) used the term *ilpa* 一派, meaning "group," instead of the more common "school (*hakpa* 學派)," to underscore that this circle of friends was not united around a single academic opinion or philosophy taught by a Master. Rather, they associated with one another based on mutual friendship (S. S. Cho 2015, 33). There was a certain amount of scholarly disagreement among its members (H. Park 2013, 209; D. Kim 2013, 199–204), but this was to be expected given the nature of the group. However, with regard to the topic of this paper, they were in general agreement and this

Learning (*bukhak* 北學) which endorsed the adoption of the advanced learning, institutions, and technologies of Qing China and challenged the assertion that Joseon was the sole inheritor of Confucian civilization.²

The Northern Learning thought of the Yeonam Group was strongly influenced by the conviction that the Han Chinese living under the Qing were the authentic heirs of Confucian civilization (S. Park 2011, 155–156; H. Park 2013, 212–215, 219–221). Personal interactions between the Yeonam Group and Han Chinese intellectuals contributed to this idea. Furthermore, the Yeonam Group's leading figures, Hong Dae-yong and Bak Ji-won, viewed the Qing as a legitimate dynasty that had inherited the Mandate of Heaven from the Ming (H. Park 2013, 51–52, 62, 280; Lee 2008). Previous studies have noted the importance of these ideas in the shaping of the Yeonam Group's Northern Learning thought, but they did not adequately examine their underlying ideology. By explicating how the members of the Yeonam Group perceived the Han Chinese and the Qing, this paper will address the reasoning behind the arguments that helped shape Northern Learning thought.

paper will address their opinions as belonging to the group itself. For example, when Bak Ji-won read Bak Je-ga's *Bukhagui* 北學議 (Theory of Northern Learning), he said that the book was the same as his own *Yeolha ilgi*, as if the two books were written by one person (Bak Ji-won, "Bukhagui seo" [Preface to *Bukhagui*], in *Yeonamjip, gwon* 7). On the other hand, their opinions on the Qing dynasty changed over time. Consider that in a letter to Han Jung-yu 韓仲由, Hong Dae-yong voiced opinions of the Qing dynasty that were not much different from those of other conservatives ("Dap Han Jung-yu seo" [Reply to Han Jung-yu], in *Damheonseo, gwon* 3). This letter seems to have been written before his visit to China. Similarly, before journeying to China, Bak Ji-won's use of the Chongzhen 崇禎 reign title was no different from that of the conservatives (Prologue of "Dognagnok" [Crossing the Yalu river] of the *Yeolha ilgi*, in *Yeonamjip, gwon* 11). But, as we can see in this paper, after his visit to China, his opinion of the Qing and the Ming dynasties stood in marked contrast to those opinions he had held before the journey. This paper mainly focuses on the opinions they formed of the Ming and Qing dynasties after their visits.

2. For studies on this, see Huh (2006, 315–366).

Arguing the Superior Position of the Han Chinese from the Viewpoint of Geography and Ethnicity

Intellectuals of late Joseon generally used three criteria to distinguish between the Chinese (civilized) and the barbarians (uncivilized): ethnicity, geography, and culture. As for the issue of ethnicity, they believed the Han Chinese were the most civilized of any ethnic group; the geographical criterion was that mainland China was the center of the world; and the third criterion was that Chinese culture, as defined by Confucian morality, was superior to every other culture (S. E. Cho 1987, 276).

Joseon intellectuals believed that if even one of these three distinctions were missing, the equation of Chinese with civilized would be jeopardized. The Ming dynasty had conformed to all three; however, some Joseon conservative elites doubted that all three criteria were met under the Qing. The distinction between Chinese and barbarian was made all the more difficult for some Joseon elite by the hair and clothing styles imposed on the Han Chinese by the Manchus.

More than two millennia prior, Confucius (551–479 BC) addressed the relationship between the adoption of barbarian clothes and hairstyles and the loss of civilization. Explaining how the Chinese narrowly avoided becoming barbarians, he opined: “But for Guan Zhong 管仲 (720–645 BC),³ we should now be wearing our hair unbound, and the lappets of our coats buttoning on the left side” (Confucius and Legge 1971, 282). In this passage, Confucius was worried that the political and ethical system of *li* 禮 (ritual) and *yi* 義 (righteousness), symbolized by hair and dress style, would cease in China if barbarian customs of fashion were adopted (Poo 2005, 122).

To those on the periphery, who viewed the Han Chinese as upholders of a great culture, these impositions by the Qing court were great indignities and a sign that whatever virtue the Han Chinese may have had was now gone.

3. Guan Zhong (720–645 BC) was a reformer of the State of Qi 齊 (11th century–221 BC) during the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history (770–476 BC). His reformation policies contributed to the defense of the Central Plains states against the barbarians.

Even though there is the scholarship of Lu Longqi 陸隴其 and Li Guangdi 李光地, the writings of Wei Xi 魏禧, Wang Wan 汪琬, and Wang Shizhen 王士禛, and the broad and profound knowledge of Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 and Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊, once they shave their heads [i.e., wear a queue] they are barbarians.⁴

The preceding excerpt from Bak Ji-won's essay "Simse pyeon" 審勢篇 (An Examination of Current Affairs) shows what Joseon conservative elites of his time generally thought of the queue and of the Han Chinese who wore it.

Such derision for the Han Chinese appears clearly in letters written between Hong Dae-yong, who had visited the Qing capital of Yanjing (Beijing) during the years 1765–1766, and Kim Jong-hu 金鍾厚 (1721–1780), a conservative Noron elite and staunch Ming loyalist. The latter described the Qing as an "enemy state emitting a foul odor" (腥穢讐域) and maintained that barbarians were not human beings (夷狄之非人). Furthermore, he was disdainful not only of the Manchus but also the Han Chinese, both of whom wore their hair and clothes in a Manchu style.⁵

Hong Dae-yong strongly disagreed with this view and criticized Kim Jong-hu for it. Hong Dae-yong seemed to think that the queue was not rationale enough to liken all contemporary Han Chinese literati to barbarians. To Hong, the hairstyle was merely a symbol and what mattered most was whether or not Confucian culture flourished. This meant that when evaluating a person or a society, he prioritized *li* and *yi* over superficial items, like queues.

Yi Deok-mu felt the same as Hong Dae-yong. He criticized the conservative elites for dismissing the Han Chinese on account of their hairstyle: "Joseon scholars say, 'All the Chinese wear [their hair in] queues now and there are no [more] authentic Confucian scholars. How can the

4. Bak Ji-won, "Ilsin supil" (Quick Essay on Horseback) of the *Yeolha ilgi*, in *Yeonamjip*, *gwon* 12.

5. Hong Dae-yong, "Jikjae dap seo" (Reply from Jikjae Kim Jong-hu), in *Damheonseo*, *gwon* 3, "至於來諭忘中華之貴以下數語 僕雖吳詬 誠不欲掛諸齒牙而上下其論也 嗟乎 所貴乎中華者 爲其居耶 爲其世耶 以居則虜隆亦然矣 以世則吳楚蠻戎 鮮有非聖賢之後者矣 足下之高仰彼人以爲貴者 果何在也 ... 至使中國聖賢之遺裔 亦皆熟習安恬 不復知有華夷之辨者 此志士仁人所以愈益憤痛 無樂乎生者也。"

teachings of Zhu Xi survive in China [if this is so]?’ However, I deeply disagree with them.”⁶ The following statement shows that Yi Deok-mu noticed the noble spirit of the contemporary Han Chinese literati in China.

Joseon’s vulgar literati just sit, without nourishing self-restraint, and engage in absurd talk [about such things as avenging the Ming]. They end up deceiving themselves and others. Knowing only of the Central Plains’ [China’s] upheavals, they do not know that a great number of [Han Chinese] literati have [as it were] many beautiful beads hidden in a leather purse [i.e., their learning hidden within themselves]. Alone, they mutter, talking of prisoners of war and barbarians. [Joseon’s literati] must be small-minded indeed.⁷

Hong developed arguments to break down the opposition of Joseon conservatives to the Han Chinese literati. He argued that based simply on geography and ethnicity the Han Chinese were superior to the people of Joseon. He believed that being a civilized person had much to do with geography and ethnicity and those born within China were naturally civilized.⁸ From this perspective, he asserted that the Han Chinese who lived in China clearly occupied a superior position with regard to the Joseon elites who lived on the periphery.

Bak Ji-won held similar ideas. He stated that by virtue of geography and ethnicity, the Han Chinese living in China were the true heirs of Confucian civilization and the rightful descendants of the subjects of former legitimate Chinese dynasties such as the Han (202 BC–AD 220), Tang (618–907), Song (960–1279), and Ming.⁹ In *Bukhagui* 北學議 (Theory of Northern Learning), Bak Je-ga (2013, 270–271) expressed similar views, stating that the Han Chinese literati families residing in mainland China were still thriving and upholding Confucian civilization. He thought that the Confucian

6. Yi Deok-mu, “Sukgang gyuyakdo bal” (Introduction to the Lecture Regulations with Diagrams), in *Ganbon ajeong yugo, gwon* 3.

7. Yi Deok-mu, “Jo Gyeong-am” (Letter to Jo Gyeong-am), in *Cheongjanggwon jeonseo, gwon* 19.

8. Hong Dae-yong, “U dap Jikjae seo” (Reply to Jikjae Kim Jong-hu), in *Damheonseo, gwon* 3.

9. Bak Ji-won, “Bukhagui seo” (Preface to *Bukhagui*), in *Yeonamjip, gwon* 7.

civilization cultivated by the Chinese, in the land of the ancient sage, had remained intact without any damage from the barbarians (S. S. Cho 2014, 102–105). Bak Je-ga noted the continuity of civilization in China. Yi Deok-mu also said that China had become a center of civilization because of its favorable climate and geographic conditions.¹⁰

For this reason, when members of the Yeonam Group described their own encounters with Han Chinese intellectuals, they mentioned that the ancestors of these literati were also brilliant intellectuals. For instance, Hong Dae-yong stated that an individual named Yan Cheng 嚴誠 (1733–?), whom he had befriended, was a descendent of Yan Guang 嚴光 (20 BC–AD 20).¹¹ Yu Deuk-gong ([1801] 1982, 438) wrote that he had met an individual named Chen Zhan 陳鱣 (?–?) who was descended from a Ming remnant (*yimin* 遺民).¹² He added that Ji Yun's 紀昀 (1724–1805) forefather, Ji Kun 紀坤 (1570–1642), had been a Ming remnant subject ([1801] 1802, 412). Ji Yun compiled the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete Library in Four Sections) and was one of the leading scholars in the field of evidential research during the Qing.

These statements emphasizing the continuity of Chinese civilization were probably intended to criticize the self-aggrandizing belief held by some Joseon elites that they were the stewards of Chinese civilization. Although the Joseon elites generally recognized the role that Chinese territory played in the formation of civilization (Bae 2012, 169–181; Karlsson 2010), Hong Dae-yong, Bak Ji-won, and Bak Je-ga pointedly reminded those elites that, both geographically and ethnically, they were on a lower rung than the Han Chinese intellectuals who were still leading the development of Confucian civilization in contemporary China.¹³

However, geography and ethnicity were merely a means for Hong Dae-yong, Bak Ji-won, and Bak Je-ga to demonstrate the continuity and

10. Yi Deok-mu, “Yeo Yi Nakseo Seo-gu seo” (Letter to Nakseo Yi Seo-gu), in *Ganbon ajeong yugo, gwon* 6.

11. Hong Dae-yong, “U dap Jikjae seo,” in *Damheonseo, gwon* 3.

12. Ming *yimin* refers to those Han Chinese who were born Ming subjects but following the Qing conquest either offered armed resistance to the Manchus or refused to interact with the new regime's government.

13. Hong Dae-yong, “U dap Jikjae seo,” in *Damheonseo, gwon* 3.

development of Confucian civilization in China. They were not the most important factors for distinguishing between uncivilized and civilized; for that the members of the Yeonam Group chose a third criterion: cultural markers (S. S. Cho 2016, 244–254).

Using the Sovereign-Subject Relationship to Justify the Queue

Hong Dae-yong, Bak Ji-won, and Bak Je-ga used the criteria of geography and ethnicity to insist on the continuity of Confucian civilization in China. Establishing proof of this continuity was an important precondition for the legitimacy of Northern Learning. However, the conservatives in Joseon society did not find this persuasive; for them, the queue raised questions about culture and civilization that were seemingly insurmountable.

As we have seen, for the conservative Noron elites, the queue hairstyle was *prima facie* evidence that the Han Chinese had become barbarians. The cultural element was in fact the most important factor in determining between Chinese (civilized) and barbarian (uncivilized) for both the Yeonam Group and conservative Noron elites. In order to recognize the Han Chinese people as civilized and to persuade Joseon society of it, the Yeonam Group had to address the matter of the queue. With this in mind, they set out to prove that the Manchu hairstyle could not be taken as proof of the contemporary Han Chinese people's cultural inferiority and, furthermore, the discontinuity of Confucian civilization.

The wearing of the queue by the Han Chinese was essentially the result of political repression and persecution by the Qing government. The queue was a symbol of the Han Chinese submission to the Manchus and was therefore very humiliating (Kuhn 1990, 49–72). However, if the members of the Yeonam Group were only concerned with this, it would have been difficult for them to accept the Han Chinese Confucian contributions. The queue had to be explained in Confucian terms. Without a Confucian rationalization of the queue, it would be very difficult for the Yeonam Group to persuade conservative intellectuals of the cultural superiority of Han Chinese intellectuals of the post-Ming.

When Confucius' favorite disciple, Yan Hui 顏回 (521 BC-?), asked how a country should be administered, Confucius answered, "Follow the seasons of Xia. Ride in the state carriage of Yin. Wear the ceremonial cap of Zhou" (Confucius and Legge 1971, 298). This response showed Confucius' comprehensive and ideal plan to govern a state by uniting the best institutions of the period known as the Three Dynasties, which he considered a model era.

However, as Zhu Xi (1130–1200) pointed out, Confucius could neither know what Xia's (2070–1600 BC) institutions were, due to their disappearance from practice, nor could he use those of Yin (1600–1046 BC), as they were outdated. Only the institutions of the Zhou (1046–256 BC), legitimized by the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), under whose reign he lived, were suitable for use at the time. Furthermore, Confucius did not hold any government post that would allow him to create rituals.¹⁴ Accordingly, he had no choice but to respect and comply with the institutions of Zhou (Zhu Xi 1990, 825). This compliance demonstrated his acceptance of the Zhou dynasty's authority. From this tacit approval arose the Confucian tradition that the "precepts and institutions of the ruler" (*shiwangzhizhi* 時王之制), legitimized by the Mandate of Heaven, were held in the highest regard by his subjects.¹⁵

If the Manchu queue fell under the rubric of the precepts and institutions of the ruler, it would have a very different meaning than if it only signified barbarianism. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (176 BC?-104 BC), a Confucian scholar active in the Han dynasty and the first to promote Confucianism as an official state ideology, showed how this assumption could be possible:

Now if Heaven has made [the reception of the Mandate] preeminently manifest and all affairs have been transferred, yet most remain unchanged,

14. See the following statement of Confucius: "One may occupy the throne, but if he has not the proper virtue, he may not dare to make ceremonies or music. One may have the virtue, but if he does not occupy the throne, he may not presume to make ceremonies or music" (Confucius and James Legge 1971, 424).

15. Yu Seong-nyong, "Dap Jo Sa-gyeong" (Reply to Jo Sa-gyeong), in *Seoaejip, gwon* 10.

then [the reception of the mandate] is neither manifest nor clear. This is not Heaven's will. Therefore, the founder of a new dynasty must shift his place of residence, assume a new dynastic name and personal name, amend the day on which the [civil] year begins, and change the color of ceremonial garb—all for no other reason than that he dare not disobey Heaven's will and fail to make clear that it is he who has been made preeminently manifest. (Dong [n.d.] 2016, 76)

The issue of clothing color is important for the Yeonam Group's discussion of the queue. The phrase “the color of the ceremonial garb” refers not only to the color but also to the style of the clothing, as well as hats and hairstyles. At the time, hairstyle had become an important aspect of ceremonial attire, partly because it was necessary to fit the hair into hats (which were a necessity).

Even intellectuals outside of the Yeonam Group took up the question of what constituted the precepts and institutions of the ruler. Hong Hui-jun 洪羲俊 (1761–1841), a son of Hong Yang-ho 洪良浩 (1724–1802), was not a Yeonam Group member but agreed with their opinions on Northern Learning.¹⁶ He offered a clear explication of what Dong Zhongshu meant regarding the colors of official clothing.

The kings of former dynasties introduced new calendar systems and changed the style and color of clothes when they founded their dynasties.... The Qing emperor became the sole ruler of China after moving from Manchuria, which had [its own] distinctive customs, including the queue, the Manchurian hat, and clothes that buttoned on the left side. The Qing emperor ordered the Han Chinese to adopt the queue and clothes that button on the left side, which they [now] have painfully worn for almost 150 years . . . making the Han Chinese follow the customs of the Manchus and wear Manchu-style clothes, the Qing emperor demonstrated his rule over China. Suppose [it were the other way round and] they [the Qing] exchanged their Manchu clothes for Chinese clothes, who would know that the Manchus ruled China?¹⁷

16. The Soron faction scholar Hong Yang-ho also advocated Northern Learning (Chin 1999, 99–125).

17. Hong Hui-jun, “Cheongin bulbok uigwan ron” (Why Manchurians Did Not Wear Chinese

Based on this logic, if the Qing had received the Mandate of Heaven and were a legitimate dynasty, then it followed that the Han Chinese should abide by all the precepts and institutions set by the emperors, even the queue. Hong Hui-jun expressed this same idea, but underscored his point by comparing the clothing of the Manchus (which Joseon elites derisively said smelled of sheep) with the ceremonial headgear of China's three earliest dynasties:

When the Qing emperor founded the dynasty [having received the Mandate of Heaven], it was fitting that he changed the day on which the civil year began as well as the color of ceremonial garb [in order to differentiate the Qing from the previous dynasty]. How is it that the mutton-smelling caps and cloaks [of the Manchus] are any different from the caps and crowns of the Xia, Yin, and Zhou dynasties?¹⁸

Hong Hui-jun said that the Qing dynasty's "mutton-smelling caps and cloaks" were not, in fact, the clothing of barbarians but were symbols of a legitimate institution ruled over by a rightful sovereign. Nor did he think that wearing a queue made the Han Chinese any less civilized; instead, it showed the Han Chinese were model Confucians abiding by the institutions of a new dynasty. This thought was not unique to him but was shared by certain other intellectuals. The late Ming scholar Wang Zhigang 王之綱 (?-?), who had collaborated with the Qing, said the following about the Han Chinese who opposed wearing the queue:

With the world pacified [i.e., the Qing conquest], how can the violent death [by execution] of a man [who refuses to wear the queue] help [i.e., change what has been decreed]? Moreover, changing the political system and the ceremonial clothing [is something] that all dynasties have done. What harm is there in shaving [one's] head?¹⁹

Clothes), in *Jeongu, gwon* 4.

18. Hong Hui-jun, "Cheongin bulbok uigwan ron," in *Jeongu, gwon* 4.

19. Yi Deok-mu, "Hwa manggeon seonsaeng" (Drawing a *Wangjin* on the Master's Forehead), in *Cheongjanggwon jeonso, gwon* 45.

With this in mind, the issue of the queue could be discussed not only in terms of a barbarian cultural marker but also in terms of the new dynasty's institutions. This is an important shift in the discourse surrounding the contemporary Han Chinese.

Hong Dae-yong and Bak Ji-won viewed the dynastic transition from the Ming to the Qing as legitimate and in accord with the Mandate of Heaven (H. Park 2013, 51–52, 62, 280; Lee 2008). Bak Ji-won said that it was through the Mandate that the Qing had, over the course of four generations, achieved a stable administration.²⁰ He also directly endorsed the Qing emperors' legitimacy by noting that there had been a total of 250 legitimate emperors from Fuxi 伏羲 (a Chinese culture hero) to the Qianlong emperor, (r. 1735–1795).²¹ Such views were echoed by Yi Deuk-mu: “From Huangdi emperor to the current Qianlong emperor, there have been 158 legitimate emperors.”²² Yi Hui-gyeong ([1805] 2011, 35–37) likened China to a house and said that the new owner (the Qing dynasty) had driven out a robber (Li Zicheng 李自成 [1605–1645], leader of the revolt that toppled the Ming) and taken charge of the house for a while on behalf of its former master (the Ming).

Hong Dae-yong, Bak Ji-won, and Bak Je-ga, on the other hand, insisted that Joseon intellectuals should recognize Chinese civilization only by distinguishing it from the barbarian Manchus ruling it. It is obvious from this that they still viewed the Manchus as ethnically barbarian. This view emerged as they looked for a way to oppose the opinions of conservative intellectuals who would regard the entirety of the Qing dynasty, including its Han Chinese subjects, as barbarian. Hong Dae-yong, Bak Ji-won, and Bak Je-ga may have in part accepted the conservatives' claim, but they did so only as part of a larger strategy to persuade them.

It seems reasonable to assume that Hong Dae-yong, Bak Ji-won, and Bak Je-ga are likely to think that this reasoning alone was insufficient to

20. Bak Ji-won, “Hojil” (A Tiger's Rebuke) of the *Yeolha ilgi*, in *Yeonamjip, gwon* 12.

21. Bak Ji-won, “Dongnan seoppil” (Essays Written in a Room Called *Dongnan*) of the *Yeolha ilgi*, in *Yeonamjip, gwon* 15.

22. Yi Deok-mu, “Imokgusim seo” (Essays Written with Ears, Eyes, Mouth, and Heart), in *Choengianggwon jeonsoo, gwon* 53.

realize the goals of Northern Learning and a more aggressive argument was needed. They found their answer in the proposition that the Qing dynasty could have the status of an orthodox dynasty while still being barbarian. However, I should point out that their opinions regarding orthodox and legitimate dynasties were somewhat different from those of contemporary conservative Joseon intellectuals.

For instance, Han Won-jin 韓元震 (1682–1751), a representative conservative Noron thinker, did not recognize barbarian dynasties, such as the Yuan (1260–1368), as orthodox dynasties.²³ On the other hand, Kim Chang-heup 金昌翕 (1653–1722), a Noron thinker and a rival of Han Won-jin, insisted that an orthodox dynasty should only mean one that had acquired and ruled Chinese territory; whether the ruler was Chinese or barbarian was immaterial. Kim Chang-heup was a great influence on the Yeonam Group (Oh 2003, 167–168).

The *jeong* of *jeongtong* 正統 [*zhengtong* in Chinese; orthodox, legitimate] is not the *jeong* [upright] of *sajeong* 邪正 [*xiezheng* in Chinese; wicked and upright]; rather, it means the *jeong* [perfection] of *pyeonjeong* 偏正 [*pianzheng* in Chinese; bias and perfection]. It is from the perspective of whether the ruler occupies wide or narrow territory. If [dynasties] are said to be morally upright or not [by Zhu Xi], how could such immoral dynasties as the Qin 秦, Jin 晉, and Sui 隋 be among the orthodox? Thus, the ruler who unites the world, whether he is moral or immoral, Chinese or barbarian, is *jeongtong*. Other discussions about orthodoxy are incorrect.²⁴

Zhu Xi said that if all the local lords give audience to a ruler and all the lawsuits within Chinese territory belong to the government, then that dynasty is orthodox.²⁵ As Kim Chang-heup mentioned above, by relying on this reasoning, Zhu Xi seems to have been satisfied that the acquisition

23. Han Won-jin, “Gyeongyeon seol ha” (Discussion in the Royal Lecture II), in *Namdangjip*, *gwon* 6.

24. Kim Chang-heup, “Mallok” (Random Records), in *Samyeonjip*, *gwon* 36.

25. Zhu Xi, “Zizhi Tongjian” (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Governance), in *Zhuzi yulei* (Thematic Discourses of Master Zhu), *gwon* 105.

and rule of Chinese territory sufficed for a dynasty to qualify as orthodox. As a result, he did not seriously take into consideration whether the rulers of the dynasties were barbarians or unruly officials and treasonous subjects (*luanchen zeizi* 亂臣賊子) when he adjudicated the orthodoxy of a dynasty.

In this regard, it is highly probable that when Bak Ji-won spoke of the Qing as an orthodox dynasty, he did not mean that it was necessarily morally upright. Among Joseon conservatives, the discourse on orthodox dynasties was rather similar to that of Fang Xiaoru 方孝孺 (1357–1402), who criticized Zhu Xi's criteria for determining whether a dynasty was orthodox.²⁶ Despite his criticism of Zhu Xi, Fang Xiaoru was an ardent follower of the Jinhua school of Zhu Xi. He felt strongly that morality was vital to the establishment of an orthodox dynasty and emphasized it more than Zhu Xi did in discussions of orthodoxy (Y. Kim 2004, 131–135).

Since Bak Ji-won considered the Qing to be no different than a legitimate dynasty, his reasoning was similar to the opinions of Dong, Hong, and Wang mentioned above. He considered the red cap of the Manchu Qing equivalent to the ceremonial cap of the Zhou: “Viewed from the perspective of the Mandate of Heaven, the ceremonial caps of Yin and Zhou each followed the precepts and institutions established by the kings of Yin and Zhou. Why do you say that the red cap of the Manchu Qing is different from them?”²⁷

Similarly, Hong Dae-yong also argued that even the tattoos, which were perceived as a distinctive feature of the Nanman 南蠻 (Southern Barbarians), constituted a custom or institution among them and had a meaning equivalent to the ceremonial cap of Yin in their respective cultural contexts.²⁸ The wearing of the queue and Manchu-style clothing were legitimized based on the assumption that if the Qing dynasty possessed the Mandate of Heaven, the contemporary Han Chinese as its subjects would have to abide by the dynasty's institutions and principles.

The question remains as to when the members of the Yeonam Group

26. Fang Xiaoru, “Shitong zhong” (Interpreting Orthodoxy II), in *Xunzhizhaiji*, *gwon* 2.

27. Bak Ji-won, “Hojil” of the *Yeolha ilgi*, in *Yeonamjip*, *gwon* 12.

28. Hong Dae-yong, “Uisan mundap” (Dialogue on Mount Iwulu), in *Damheonso*, *gwon* 4.

thought the Han Chinese had become Qing subjects. Bak Ji-won made it clear that this occurred after the Kangxi emperor's reign (r. 1661–1722).²⁹ Although Hong Dae-yong and Yi Deuk-mu did not explicitly suggest a moment when this change occurred, each mentioned that no one should condemn the Han Chinese literati for serving in the Qing government.³⁰ It seems that the two considered the transition to have happened by the Qianlong period, at the latest.

This reasoning meant that a ruler-subject relationship, one of the most important of Confucian relationships, had been established between the Qing emperor and all the Han Chinese under his rule since at least the Qianlong period. Bak, Hong, and Yi seemed to think that this reasoning could be a means, within the Confucian discourse, of explaining the Han Chinese acquiescence to wearing the queue. These writings by Bak, Hong, and Yi argue for a new interpretation of the role played by cultural elements in distinguishing between the civilized and the barbarian.

If the Qing dynasty were an orthodox dynasty, its Han Chinese subjects would have inevitably entered into a sovereign-subject relationship with the Qing emperor. In light of this, the queue would be part of the new dynastic institutions that the Han Chinese would follow, compelled as they were by the Confucian morality inherent in a subject's loyalty to the sovereign. This reasoning demonstrated that all three criteria were still in effect and that, despite what some conservatives said, the Han Chinese in Qing China were still the stewards of civilization.

The Ideology of Editing the Biographies of Ming Remnants

When Hong Dae-yong wrote to Kim Jong-hu (in the “Yeo Kim Jikjae Jong-hu seo”) and used the reign name (*nianhao* 年號) “Kangxi,” the latter

29. Bak Ji-won, “Simse pyeon,” in *Yeonamjip*, *gwon* 14.

30. Hong Dae-yong, “Yeo Kim Jikjae Jong-hu seo” (Letter Written to Jikjae Kim Jong-hu), in *Damheonseo*, *gwon* 3; Yi Deok-mu, “Bakhak hongsa gwa,” in *Cheongjanggwon jeonseo*, *gwon* 56.

criticized Hong Dae-yong for this.³¹ Other conservative Joseon elites also criticized Bak Ji-won for using the reign names Kangxi and Qianlong in his *Yeolha ilgi* 熱河日記 (Jehol Diary) and slandered him for wearing clothes similar to those of the barbarians (Bak 1997, 139–141).

At that time, except for when it was unavoidable, such as in government documents and official publications, the majority of Joseon officials and intellectuals stubbornly continued to use the reign name of the Chongzhen emperor (r. 1628–1644), the last Ming emperor. By doing this, they not only expressed their belief that Manchu rule was illegitimate but were able to extend Ming civilization within the territory of Joseon (Haboush 2005, 115–141). They must have regarded the Yeonam Group's use of the Qing reign names as unacceptable and tantamount to treason, as reign names suggested a humiliating surrender of Joseon and its absolute submission to the Qing.

Loyalty to the Ming was shared by most Joseon intellectuals at the time. Although they acknowledged the legitimacy of the Qing, the Yeonam Group did not abandon respect and reverence for the Ming remnant subjects. To understand their Ming loyalism and acknowledgment of Qing legitimacy, it is necessary to delve into the details of how, in their own eyes, the loyalty of a subject to his ruler fit within Confucian morality. Yi Deok-mu's *Noeroe rangnak seo* 磊磊落落書 (Book of Noble Spirit) will help answer that question.

Yi Deok-mu collected the biographies of 710 Ming remnants and compiled them into a book titled *Noeroe rangnak seo*. The book's title derives from a phrase about rocks that have been piled in a prominent manner; by extension, however, the term also refers to the noble spirit and character of a person. The title suggests that he wanted to show the noble spirit and character of these Ming remnants.

What, then, is the noble spirit and character that he wanted to show? Recent studies have claimed that the composition of *Noeroe rangnak seo* was inspired by loyalty to the Ming and opposition to the Qing, similar to beliefs held by conservative Noron elites (Woo 2012, 353–354; Son 2014, 339–354). Although of great merit, these studies have seemingly overlooked the subtle

31. Hong Dae-yong, "Jikjae dap seo," in *Damheonseo, gwon 3*.

differences between each group's ideologies.

Any analysis of his motives for compiling *Noeroe rangnak seo* should take into account the Qing court's re-evaluation of Ming loyalists. In the 11th lunar month of 1775, the Qianlong emperor ordered that honor be restored to the loyal Ming subjects by granting each a posthumous epithet (*shihao* 諡號). The *Shengchao xunjie zhuchen lu* 勝朝殉節諸臣錄 (Record of Subjects Who Died on Account of Their Loyalty for the Defeated Dynasty), published in 1776 by the Qing government, was the result of the emperor's order (Choi 1978, 41). In the 12th lunar month of the same year, the emperor ordered the compilation of the *Erchen zhuan* 貳臣傳 (Biographies of Subjects Who Served Two Dynasties). The goal of the book was to criticize those Ming subjects who had chosen the Qing over their own dynasty (Choi 1978, 38–40).

In 1778, while Yi Deok-mu was in Yanjing, he seemed to have been greatly interested in the emperor's project. For instance, he introduced the Qianlong emperor's evaluation of Qian Qianyi 錢謙益 (1582–1664) into his own collection. The emperor wrote: "Such figures as Qian Qianyi who boasted of being a loyal Ming subject but shamelessly surrendered to the Qing.... they have lost all reason and are without shame."³² Yi Deok-mu also noted that the Qianlong emperor gave generous rewards to the Ming subjects who had maintained their fidelity to their dynasty to the end.³³ The emperor praised those who had remained loyal to the Ming dynasty, but disparaged Qian Qianyi for his disloyalty. Seong Dae-jung, Yi's close friend, offered the following analysis on the matter:

A person who seeks to conquer the world would naturally remove those who resist him and reward those who submit to him. The victor, however, after conquering the world, always rewarded those who resisted him while despising those who are obedient to him as subjects. Praising enemies who resisted him [out of loyalty to their sovereign] [was used] in order to persuade his subjects to be more loyal to him. . . . As part of its efforts to take

32. Yi Deok-mu, "Gapsin gyeongsa sunjeol" (People Who Died at Beijing Defending Their Loyalty to the Ming in the Year 1644), in *Cheongjanggwon jeonso, gwon* 56.

33. Yi Deok-mu, "Gapsin gyeongsa sunjeol," in *Cheongjanggwon jeonso, gwon* 56.

over the world, the Qing government killed Zuo Maodi 左懋第 and Shi Kefa 史可法, who resisted the Qing, and favored Hong Chengchu 洪承疇 and Zu Dashou 祖大壽, who were obedient to the Qing. After conquering and occupying the world however, the Qing government listed Hong Chengchu and Zu Dashou among the *Erchen zhuan* while it praised the loyalty of Shi Kefa and Zuo Maodi.³⁴

Seong Dae-jung seemed to understand precisely the reason the Qianlong emperor criticized Qian Qianyi and praised loyal Ming subjects such as Zuo Maodi (1601–1645) and Shi Kefa (1601–1645). Doing so encouraged the loyalty of the current Qing subjects by emphasizing the Confucian bond between subject and sovereign (Choi 1978, 40–47).

The mention of *Erchen zhuan*, in the preceding quotation indicates that Yi Deok-mu and others were aware of the work. Yi Deok-mu had read Seong Dae-jung's *Cheongseong japgi* 青城雜記 (Miscellaneous Records of Cheongseong), which contained the preceding quotation. He also referenced *Erchen zhuan* in the entry for “Dong buin” 童夫人 (Lady Dong) in his *Noeroe rangnak seo*. In the “Gapsin gyeongsa sunjeol” section of the “Angyeopgi” 盎葉記 chapter of his anthology *Cheongjanggwan jeonso* 靑莊館全書 (Complete Works of Cheongjanggwan Yi Deok-mu), he quoted a 1775 edict by the Qianlong emperor, which referred to *Shengchao xunjie zhuchen lu*.

Like Yi Deok-mu, Bak Ji-won was also aware of the new developments being led by the emperor at the Qing court. In his *Yeolha ilgi*, he directly quoted the 1775 edict that argued for honoring Ming loyalists such as Shi Kefa and criticized twice-serving subjects such as Qian Qianyi.³⁵ Inspired by this edict, Bak Ji-won believed that Joseon's Ming loyalists, such as Hong Ik-han 洪翼漢 (1586–1637), O Dal-je 吳達濟 (1609–1637), Yun Jip 尹集 (1606–1637), and Kim Sang-heon 金尙憲 (1570–1652),³⁶ should be made widely known to and re-evaluated as loyal subjects by the contemporary

34. Seong Dae-jung, “Seongeon” (Words to Enlighten People), in *Cheongseong japgi*, gwon 4.

35. Bak Ji-won, “Dongnan seoppil” of the *Yeolha ilgi*, in *Yeonamjip*, gwon 15.

36. They were tortured and killed by the Qing government for their role in resisting the Manchu invasion of 1636.

Qing court.³⁷

Even if they were displeased that the Ming no longer ruled China, members of the Yeonam Group, nevertheless, recognized the Qing to be no different than a legitimate dynasty. For this reason, the group's loyalty to the Ming manifested itself as a type of nostalgia unaccompanied by any actual attempts to restore the former dynasty. Examples of this nostalgia included recalling the kindness of the Wanli emperor (r. 1572–1620), who had sent troops to help defend Joseon against Japanese invasions (1592–1598); and mourning the Chongzhen emperor.³⁸

Yi Deok-mu's intention of editing the *Noeroe rangnak seo* also showed an intellectual and nostalgic aspect, centered on recalling Ming intellectuals. Yi Seo-gu 李書九 (1754–1825), a Yeonam Group member as well as Yi Deok-mu's close friend, explained Yi's reason for writing *Noeroe rangnak seo*:

I [Yi Deok-mu] have befriended famous officials and hermit literati from the reigns of the Longqing, Wanli, Tianqi, and Chongzhen emperors. Is not my socializing so much better and more beautiful than the worldly social intercourse of those who flatter others to their faces and criticize them behind their backs?³⁹

This excerpt reveals that Yi Deok-mu interacted with literati from the reigns of four Ming emperors in a manner that transcended time and space: he read and pondered their works. This way of thinking became an important impetus for composing the *Noeroe rangnak seo*, as it strongly reflected his intention to memorialize and connect intellectually with past Ming intellectuals and loyalists. Because the above excerpt reports Yi Deok-mu's words directly, it may come much closer to revealing his motivations for writing the *Noeroe rangnak seo* than do any of the other sources which all indirectly report his motives.

The Yeonam Group remembered the Ming dynasty in terms of “the righteous bond between ruler and subject” and as possessing “great figures

37. Bak Ji-won, “Dongnan seoppil” of the *Yeolha ilgi*, in *Yeonamjip*, *gwon* 15.

38. Bak Ji-won, “Ilsin supil” of the *Yeolha ilgi*, in *Yeonamjip*, *gwon* 12.

39. Yi Seo-gu, “Yi Mugwan myoji myeong” (Epitaph of Yi Deok-mu), in *Cheokjaejip*, *gwon* 9.

of noble spirit.” Although it is hard to know exactly what they thought, we do know the Yeonam Group placed more importance on Confucian morality than anything else. This allowed them to distinguish between the civilized and the barbarian in a way that was different from the Noron conservative elite. This was the reason they recognized the Qing dynasty and its Confucian culture as legitimate and worthy of its subjects’ loyalty. By holding on to the Confucian principle that a subject owed allegiance to his sovereign, the Han Chinese were able, after the Qing conquest, to participate in the new polity (Langlois 1980, 357).

It follows that when the Mandate of Heaven changed, the subject’s loyalty also changed. Therefore, it was completely natural for the Han Chinese, who were born after the Qing conquest, to be loyal to the Qing; but, Ming remnants were also right in maintaining their allegiance to the previous dynasty. In each case, the remnant subjects and the subjects of the new dynasty upheld Confucian teachings regarding the ruler and the ruled. The Yeonam Group regarded both groups as model Confucians. On account of this reasoning, they could remain loyal to the Ming dynasty without regarding the Qing dynasty as illegitimate. Thus, Yi Deok-mu wrote the *Noeroe rangnak seo* to demonstrate this principle in action.

This was similar to the way the Qianlong emperor and the Han intellectuals of the time saw the Ming remnant subjects. In their eyes, the actions taken by the remnant subjects revealed them to be exemplars of Confucian probity (Chan 2000, 43–52; 2011, 158). It is reasonable to think that Yi Deok-mu was aware of these views as he compiled the writings of Han Chinese intellectuals into what would form the *Noeroe rangnak seo*.

Liuxi waizhuan 留溪外傳 (Liuxi’s Unofficial Biographies) by Chen Ding 陳鼎 (1650–?) is an example of how Yi Deok-mu and Han Chinese intellectuals shared analogous views of the Ming remnants. The *Liuxi waizhuan* regarded the Ming remnants as virtuous men, loyal to their sovereign (Qiu 2012, 176–178). This work was quoted 87 times in the *Noeroe rangnak seo* and was the fifth most frequently cited work among the 176 Chinese works used for the compilation.⁴⁰ Yi Deok-mu had lent the

40. These calculations were done by the author. Regarding the 176 Chinese works used for the

Liuxi waizhuan to Yi Seo-gu, saying, “[this work] is filled with stories about filial sons, loyalists, virtuous women, and hermits. It will help us firmly establish Confucian morality in the world.”⁴¹ It is easy to see that Yi Deok-mu and Chen Ding shared similar sentiments.

The position of the Yi Deok-mu becomes clearer when one examines the *Hwangmyeong yumin jeon* 皇明遺民傳 (Biographies of Remnant Subjects of the Imperial Ming), another collection of Ming remnant biographies that was written from the conservative Noron viewpoint. *Hwangmyeong yumin jeon* was compiled by Seong Dae-jung’s son, Seong Hae-ung 成海應 (1760–1839) in the early nineteenth century; it is a seven-volume record of 535 Ming remnant subjects. Seong Hae-ung’s view of the Qing can be discerned in the fact that he argued that a legitimate emperor wearing a queue was an impossibility.⁴² He also said that he wrote the *Hwangmyeong yumin jeon* with joy in the hopes that the barbarian Manchus would be expelled from China at some point in the future.⁴³

Seong Hae-ung did not consider the contemporary queue-wearing Han Chinese to be, in any way, the inheritors of Ming civilization. He was proud that only Joseon literati, who did not wear queues, were qualified to represent Confucian civilization.⁴⁴ Given his emphasis on the queue as a marker of Sino-barbarian distinction, it is apparent that he wrote *Hwangmyeong yumin jeon* from the perspective of the conservative Noron elite.

The conservative Noron elites regarded the Sino-barbarian distinction as more important than the Confucian principle of loyalty to the sovereign. Han Won-jin staunchly supported Lu Liuliang 呂留良 (1629–1683), a famous anti-Qing Han Chinese poet, who wrote, “Upholding the difference

compilation, Son (2014, 337) and Yi Deouk-mu (“*Noeroe nangnak seo inyong seomok*” [List of Quoted Books in the *Noeroe nangnak seo*], *Cheongjanggwon jeonseo, gwon* 36) were referred.

41. Yi Deok-mu, “Yeo Yi Nakseo Seo-gu seo,” in *Ganbon ajeongyugo, gwon* 6.

42. Seong Hae-ung, “Jeongtong non” (Discussion on Authenticity), in *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip, gwon* 32.

43. Seong Hae-ung, “Hwangmyeong yumin jeon seo” (Preface to *Hwangmyeong yumin jeon*), in *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip, gwon* 31.

44. Seong Hae-ung, “Hwangmyeong yumin jeon seo,” in *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip, gwon* 31.

between Chinese and barbarian is more important than respecting the Confucian morality of a subject's loyalty to the sovereign."⁴⁵ This contrasts with the position of the Yeonam Group, which placed more emphasis on the Confucian relationship between the subject and the sovereign.

In what ways did *Hwangmyeong yumin jeon* and *Noeroe nangnak seo* differ from one another, seeing as they both used writings by Han Chinese? Seong Hae-ung transformed these writings to some extent, unlike Yi Deok-mu. For example, Yi Deok-mu adopted the term "da Qing" 大清 (literally, "the Great Qing") from Chen Ding's *Liuxi waizhuan* in his entry for Lin Zengzhi 林增志 without any modification,⁴⁶ while Seong Hae-ung, for the same entry, wrote only "Qing" 清. In another example, Yi Deok-mu took the words "*qianchao fuse*" 前朝服色 (the preceding dynasty's clothing color), without any change, from the *Liuxi waizhuan*'s entry for Yang Yuji 楊毓奇;⁴⁷ but, Seong Hae-ung changed the wording to "*Myeong uigwan*" 明衣冠 (Ming dynasty clothing).⁴⁸ Through this, we can see that Seong Hae-ung deliberately avoided acknowledging the Qing dynasty.

The writing of the *Noeroe nangnak seo* was presumably influenced by the Qing emperor's decision to restore honor to Ming remnants and, like similar Qing compilations, it emphasized the subject's loyalty to the sovereign. By focusing on the Confucian principle of the subject's loyalty to the sovereign, Yi Deok-mu formulated an ideology that could recognize both the political status of Ming remnants and the contemporary Han Chinese; it also simultaneously satisfied Ming loyalism and Northern Learning thought.

Conclusion

The way the Yeonam Group perceived the Han Chinese literati living

45. Han Won-jin, "Dap Yi Ja-sam" (Reply to Yi Ja-sam), in *Namdangjip*, gwon 17.

46. Yi Deok-mu, "Lin Zhengzhi," in *Cheongjanggwon jeonseo*, gwon 37.

47. Yi Deok-mu, "Yang Yuji," in *Cheongjanggwon jeonseo*, gwon 44.

48. Seong Hae-ung, "Yang Yuji," in *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip*, gwon 42.

under the Qing influenced the development of Northern Learning. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Joseon's conservatives considered the Han Chinese, as well as the Manchus, barbarians because of the queue hairstyle they wore. However, when the members of the Yeonam Group met Han Chinese literati in China, they found them well grounded in Confucian culture. Influenced by the Han Chinese literati they had met, the members of the Yeonam Group were convinced that civilization still flourished in Qing China and produced important ideas that might benefit both Joseon society and its government.

In order to win acceptance for these ideas, the Yeonam Group had to change the negative perception of the Han Chinese intellectuals in Qing China held by conservative Joseon elites. They did this by addressing the three criteria for distinguishing between the Chinese (civilized) and the barbarians (uncivilized): ethnicity, geography, and culture. First, conservatives were told that on account of geography and ethnicity, the Han Chinese literati in China were far more civilized than the Joseon elite. In terms of culture, the members of the Yeonam Group made a special effort to defend the wearing of a queue.

Hong Dae-yong and Bak Ji-won, the leading figures of the Yeonam Group, thought that the Qing dynasty was qualified to inherit the Mandate of the Heaven and that the Han Chinese living under Qing rule were the rightful subjects of the Qing emperor. Based on the Confucian tradition of respecting the precepts and institutions of the current ruler (*shiwangzhizhi*), they considered the queue an institution that all subjects should abide by. As such, they understood queues in the context of the Confucian principle of the loyalty owed by subject to the sovereign, rather than as a measure for distinguishing between Chinese and barbarian.

However, the conservative elite found fault with Hong Dae-yong and Bak Ji-won's reasoning. To them, Hong and Bak appeared to be pro-Qing. Although the Yeonam Group acknowledged the Qing dynasty, they continued to honor the Ming. In order to understand their loyalty to the Ming and their acknowledgment of the Qing, it is necessary to understand the Confucian relationship between subject and sovereign. Yi Deok-mu's *Noeroe nangnak seo* helped solidify the Yeonam Group's understanding of

this Confucian principle. The loyalty of the Ming remnants and the loyalty of the Han Chinese to the Qing were two facets of this same principle. This emphasis on Confucian morality provided an acceptable way for the Yeonam Group to recognize the cultural and technological advances made by the Qing without abandoning fidelity to the defunct Ming.

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