

RASR

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If Rice University's Asian Studies program has one thing that is undisputedly world-class, that would be our students. Not only are they in the usual sense good and bright, but they are also equipped with the ability to innovate, an eye for the unprecedented, and a passion for the prominent. They have demonstrated these qualities time and time again in their class performances, extra-curricular activities, campus leadership, and public engagement. This collection of research papers is another such example.

The assortment of papers in this collection represents not only the intellectual capability, analytical skill, and lucid writing of our Asian Studies students, but also their editorial and organizational skills as well as collaborative work ethic, as the editorial group of the Rice Asian Studies Organization (RASO) took the initiative from the very first step of this production; starting with proposing the student publication, keeping the schedule, soliciting faculty reviewers, and editing and proof-reading in the final publication stage. We at the Chao Center for Asian Studies and all Asian Studies-affiliated faculty are immensely proud of our students' achievement.

I hope this publication will let the audience, both in and beyond the Rice community, know the high quality scholarly work of our students, and I also hope that this will be the first of many volumes to come in the future. My congratulations to the RASO editorial group for pulling off this remarkable tour de force.

SONIA RYANG

**T.T. and W.F. Chao Professor of Asian Studies
Director, Chao Center for Asian Studies**



ABOUT RICE ASIAN STUDIES REVIEW

21st century Asia is in the midst of rapid political, economic, and cultural change. As people, goods, ideas, and cultures reverse colonial flow and begin emanating from Asia across the globe, it is clear that the scholarly lens through which Asia has traditionally been approached by Western-trained academics is sorely in need of revision. **Rice Asian Studies Review (RASR)**, as an undergraduate Asia-focused academic journal authored by Rice undergraduates and managed by members of Rice Asian Studies Organization (RASO), situates itself on the front line of this process by providing a venue for young scholars to exhibit their own ideas and learn from those of their peers. Our goal is to produce a compilation of diverse, unconventional, and informed Asian Studies perspectives. As authors, editors, and publishers come together in the production of RASR, this fresh cohort of 21st century scholars hopes to promote a dynamic, modern, and interdisciplinary approach to Asian Studies.

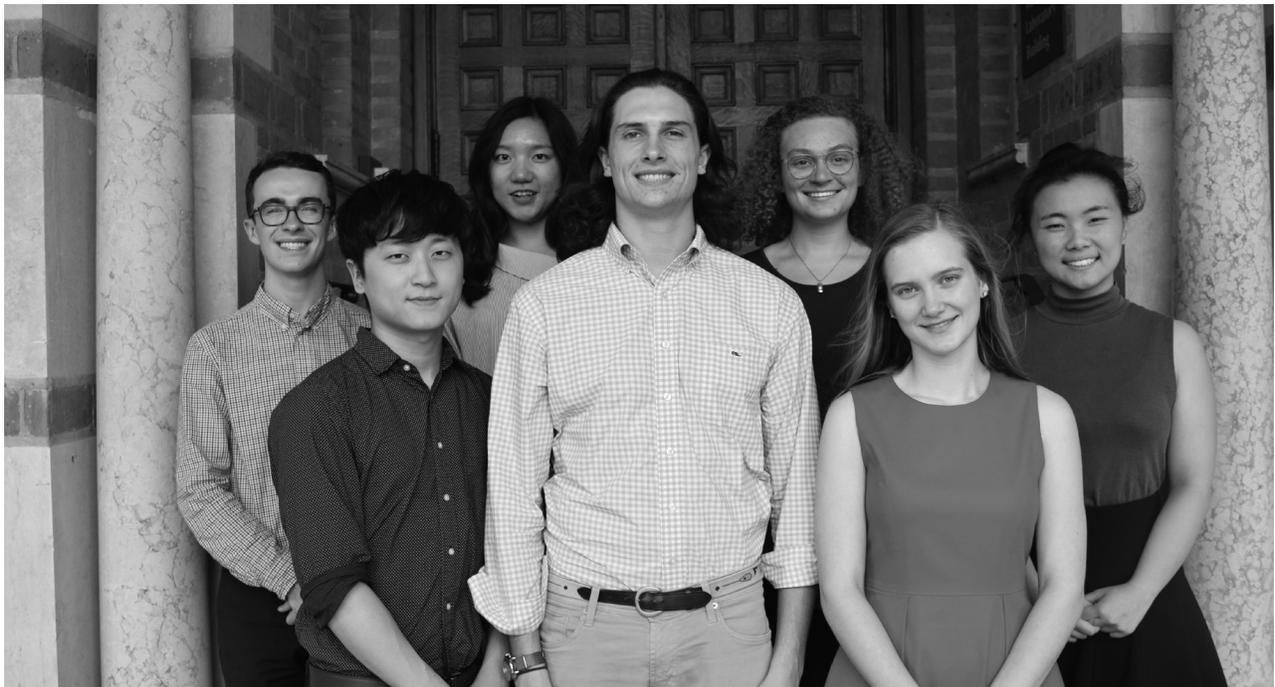


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RASR EDITORIAL BOARD (2016-17)

From left to right: Avery Jordan, Justin Park, Connie Yichen Zhang, Jackson Neagli, Taylor Ginter, Aidan McBride, Juliann Bi
Not pictured: Aaron Huang (abroad in Spring 2017)

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About the cover: Fifty-one nations and territories defined geographically Asia by the United Nations are represented in decreasing order of population. Designed by Justin Park.

When we first took the helm of Rice Asian Studies Organization (RASO) only a year after its inception, our primary goal was to use Rice's newly institutionalized undergraduate Asian Studies community to create a forum for Rice undergraduates to explore and showcase their Asian Studies research. Well aware of the fact that Rice students are exceptional in the time, effort, and enthusiasm that they devote to their studies, we hypothesized that a repository of high-quality Asian Studies research already existed at Rice, gathering dust on the hard drives of RASO members. We were correct. After receiving 17 manuscripts, nearly all of which were of publishable quality, we realized that, though RASO was only a year old and RASR was in its beginning stages, the Rice undergraduate Asian Studies community was already vibrant. Going forward, RASO and RASR hope to harness this vibrance, the curious spirit of academic integrity that characterizes so many of Rice's Asian Studies students, and showcase it for all of Rice to see.

Curating the inaugural edition of the Rice Asian Studies Review has, for all of us, been a gratifying experience. Rather than spending time hunting down submissions, cajoling faculty reviewers, or pressing authors to edit, we found that undergraduate authors, faculty reviewers, and especially Chao Center advisors were as keen as we were to ensure the success of RASR's inaugural edition. By simply tapping into Rice's powerful undercurrent of academic curiosity, we found ourselves able to devote less focus to the purely administrative aspects of RASR, and more energy towards improving its intellectual quality. Coordinating the collaborative campus-wide effort to publish a high-quality academic journal from scratch has been an invaluable learning experience for all members of the editorial board.

This journal of six articles, constituting an interdisciplinary exploration of diverse phenomena in a variety of Asian regions, is exactly what we had in mind when we set forth our mission statement's goal of compiling diverse, unconventional, and informed Asian Studies perspectives. We hope that this tradition of investigating a broad range of Asian Studies issues through diverse and often unconventional academic lenses remains at the core of the journal for years to come. We see the unique approach to Asian Studies embodied by this journal, with its disregard for borders and boundaries of all kinds, be they national, normative, academic, or cultural, to be RASR's institutional anchor.

It has been our unique privilege to preside over the publication of this year's inaugural edition of the Rice Asian Studies Review. We hope that the successful publication of this inaugural edition inspires future Asia-inclined Rice students to pursue their academic interests beyond the classroom, and ensure that the incredible passion and curiosity characteristic of Rice students is reflected in RASR for years to come.

Regards,



Jackson Neagli
Editor-in-Chief



Aidan McBride
Managing Editor



Justin Park
Director of Publications



PHOTO COURTESY: JUSTIN PARK

Picture of Mechanical Laboratory at Rice University, where Chao Center for Asian Studies is located.

The inaugural edition of RASR would not have been possible without the generous support of Rice's Chao Center for Asian Studies. The Editors are profoundly indebted to CCAS Director Dr. Sonia Ryang and Associate Director Dr. Haejin E. Koh. Without their tireless support, assistance, advice, and encouragement, the journal would not have been able to achieve such a high academic standard. By drawing on the academic expertise of Drs. Ryang and Koh, RASR was able to find its footing as an institution, which will allow the journal to continue to publish high-quality content long after its initial editors have left Rice.

The RASR staff also extend their heartfelt thanks to Dr. Brianne Donaldson, Dr. Songying Fang, Dr. Han Sang Kim, Dr. Steven Lewis, Dr. Michael McCarty, and Dr. Linda Neagley for their generous donation of time and expertise as faculty reviewers for the articles in RASR's inaugural edition. The expert insights provided by faculty reviewers greatly enhanced the academic caliber of the articles included in this edition of RASR. We are extremely grateful that the authors published in this edition of RASR had the opportunity to draw from the immense body of faculty expertise on Rice's campus.

We would also like to thank the authors themselves, as without their willingness to work with us as we felt our way through the editing process, there would be no journal to publish at all. We appreciate the time and effort they put into their articles, and wish them the best of luck in their academic and professional pursuits.

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Gods Among Us: Anatomical Devotional Icons in the Medieval Examined through the Lens of New Materialism

Rachel George

ABSTRACT

Both China and Europe have independent traditions of crafting life-sized devotional icons of deities, specifically those believed to have once inhabited mortal human bodies such as Buddhas and Christ. In contrast to traditions of glorifying religious figures by depicting them at a monumental scale, these icons were built to reference the human body. Toward this aim they exhibit uncanny details that reference physical features such as skin, internal organs, and even bleeding wounds. This article discusses an Eastern and a Western example of “anatomical” devotional icons: the Buddha of Seiryōji, a 10th-century work created in China but currently on display in Japan, and the Cristo de Burgos, a “movable arms Christ figure” from 14th-century Spain. By comparing these two geographically distant devotional icons, this article demonstrates how the cultural context of an anatomical icon, including both a people’s spiritual belief system and their medical knowledge, must be understood to make sense of how these icons facilitated the experience of the sacred in a ritual context.

INTRODUCTION

The Buddha of Seiryōji and the Cristo de Burgos are life-sized sculpted devotional icons, which depict sacred figures believed to have once inhabited human bodies. The fact that they are both life-sized is striking. One would expect them to be either larger-than-life to demonstrate the power and importance of the sacred figures they depict, or smaller so as to be portable. The fact that they are life-sized appears to be a purposeful choice by their creators to make these objects appear human-like. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that both the Buddha of Seiryōji (see fig. 1), a 10th-century work made in China but currently on display in Japan, and the the Cristo de Burgos (see fig. 2), a “movable arms Christ figure” from 14th-century Spain, have other traits that reference living human bodies.¹ The Buddha of Seiryōji contains life-sized model of human internal organs, while the Cristo de Burgos has moveable limbs and realistic skin and hair. The two figures both display a collection of traits that reference human anatomy, giving them a human presence that invigorates their spiritual power.

The idea that objects can have a presence that translates into a specific experience for those interacting with the object is in line with the thinking of New Materialism. New Materialism is a way of thinking about objects which awards their material incarnation with agency and influence.² The concerns of New Materialism will be explored in this article’s discussion of the Buddha of Seiryōji and the Cristo de Burgos, including experiencing objects with multiple senses, materiality, movement, and ritual usage. By examining and comparing the characteristics of these anthropomorphic sculptures, it is argued that the naturalistic anatomical features of these objects enliven and empower them, ultimately allowing them to elicit both awe and respect in their viewers by depicting sacred figures as a living, tangible presence.

This article will consist of three sections. First, the Buddha of Seiryōji and the Cristo de Burgos will be put in historical context by means of comparison to other geographically and temporally contemporary artworks that are also noted for their anatomical traits.

The second section will delve into the mechanics of the Buddha of Seiryōji and the Cristo de Burgos that reference naturalistic anatomy. The article will conclude with a discussion of how these characteristics function within a ritual context in order to make the case that their anatomical traits—within the context of ritual—empower these objects spiritually.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The material culture of both China and Europe during the medieval period demonstrate the degree of medical and anatomical knowledge of their respective cultures. A key manifestation of these culture's medical knowledge is the visual symbology they use to convey medical concepts. The Buddha of Seiryōji and the Cristo de Burgos demonstrate their connection to anatomy by reflecting conventions of anatomical art from their respective cultures.

By the 10th century, the Chinese had a well-developed understanding of internal anatomy due in part to the findings of Yanluozi, a Daoist anatomist. Yanluozi produced a series of body charts entitled the *Charts of the Inner Realm* (see figs. 3 & 4), featuring depictions of the “magico-realistic inner torso” that demonstrates how 10th-century China understood human internal organs through the lens of their religious beliefs.³ For example, these depictions include references to Chinese numerology and alchemy (see fig.

3). They also include a multi-petal “flower” shape found frequently in Chinese depictions of internal organs (see fig. 4), often to represent the stomach (although in Yanluozi's renderings, they are placed where the lungs are located).⁴ Yanluozi's *Charts of the Inner Realm* demonstrate how spiritual teachings (in Yanluozi's case, Daoist teachings) are integrated into the 10th-century Chinese conceptualization of the internal torso.

The Chinese appear to have been the first to have made and employed anatomical mannequins.⁵ Anatomical mannequins made their first appearance during the Song dynasty (960-1279 C.E.), and continued to be produced through the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 C.E.).⁶ Among the most famous Song Dynasty anatomical models are life-size bronze sculptures used to identify acupuncture points (see fig. 5), one of which even contained removable wooden organs, an inclusion which resembles the placement of cloth internal organs in the Buddha of Seiryōji. In Medieval China, the trend of inserting internal organs into devotional sculptures corresponds to the introduction of medical mannequins containing internal organs.⁷

In comparison to China, Europe was something of a late bloomer in the medical field. The first European mannequins clearly associated with the study of anatomy are a series of small ivory models with removable internal organs from the seventeenth century (see fig. 6). Most are about 15 cm in length,

EDITOR'S NOTE

Due to copyright issues, we were unable to reprint the figures referred to in George's article. We have prepared a compiled list of figures on our website, along with author-written captions and hyperlinks to the original source of the images.

Please use this QR code for direct access.



and were kept in small wooden boxes with velvet or satin cushioning. This class of miniature ivory anatomical models usually had removable ivory organs, occasionally painted in different colors in order to help differentiate them.⁸ While these mannequins demonstrate internal anatomical knowledge on par with the Chinese anatomical prints by Yanluozi, they postdate Yanluozi by seven centuries.

Anatomical mannequins in Europe postdate our object of interest, the Cristo de Burgos, by three centuries. However, the fourteenth century was a formative period for the study of anatomy in the West—the first formal studies and exploration of the human body known to have employed dissection, since the third century, were performed during this period. Anatomist and surgeon Montino de Luzzi was responsible for this return to dissection, and published many prints of internal organs in a folio entitled *Anathomia* (see fig. 7).⁹ The creation of the Cristo de Burgos corresponded with a renewed interest in anatomy, and perhaps even the beginning of a return to scientific medical inquiry in Europe.

At the same time as de Luzzi's renewed interest in anatomy (the early gothic), animated sculptures of Christ which had moveable joints, known as "moveable arm crucifixes," became very popular. Their popularity persisted throughout the Late Medieval period.¹⁰ They were differentiated from other crucifixes by the inclusion of anatomically correct mechanical joints at places on Christ's body, such as the shoulders and elbows. These joints were made of interlocking wooden units, with metal or wooden nails holding them together (see fig. 8).¹¹ Moveable arms crucifixes had the ability to be posed in lifelike configurations, intensifying their naturalism and making them appear more lifelike to worshippers.

THE ANATOMICAL TRAITS

One of the most lifelike of the class of objects referred to as moveable arms christ mannequins is the Cristo de Burgos, a moveable arms crucifix covered

completely in calf skin in order to conceal its mechanical joints and give the illusion of human skin (see fig. 2). The calfskin is overlaid on a thin layer of wool batting, giving the surface of the object the appearance and springy supple quality of human flesh. The result is a texture so lifelike that during the 17th century it was rumored that the Cristo de Burgos was covered with human skin.¹² The clear intention of allowing touch to be a critical element of the viewers' experience is one of many aspects of the Cristo de Burgos that are best understood through the lens of New Materialism. Contrary to how one would normally experience sculpture in a strictly visual sense, the Cristo de Burgos is meant to be experienced tactually as well as visually.

In addition to the Cristo de Burgos' lifelike skin, it stands apart from other moveable arm crucifixes through its use of real hair, attached to the head and beard of Christ with an adhesive (see fig. 9). Compared to the majority of moveable arms crucifixes that have their hair carved into the block of wood that composes their head, the animal hair attached to the Cristo de Burgos is notable for its attentive naturalism (see fig. 10).¹³ Additionally, the teeth and eyes of the Cristo de Burgos are intricately rendered with careful brushstrokes (see fig. 9). Unlike other, less detailed, moveable arm crucifixes which have a mask-like appearance, the Cristo de Burgos is expressive due to the careful rendering of its face (see fig. 10). The Cristo de Burgos distinguishes itself from other moveable arms crucifixes through its extreme attention to naturalism.

The Cristo de Burgos is intended not only to appear human-like; but also to remind viewers of the magnitude of Christ's suffering. The Cristo de Burgos is set apart from other moveable arm Christ sculptures by the graphic wounds covering its body in a greater quantity and with increased emphasis, compared to other moveable arms crucifixes (compare figs. 11 & 12).¹⁴ Thick dark drops of blood densely blanket the body of Christ, pouring from gashes across the body and the puncture wounds on Christ's hands and feet (see fig. 11 & 2). The gravity of these injuries is intensified by

the human-like appearance of the *Cristo de Burgos* making the injuries seem especially genuine, even gruesome. These wounds reference the physical body of Christ in a gambit to emphasize his suffering on the cross.

It is notable that the technology of life-size wooden sculptures with moveable joints appeared in the East long before its debut in Europe. In the 11th-century Liao dynasty, there are many examples of life-sized wooden mannequins with a cavity in the torso to store deposits of cremated remains (see fig. 13).¹⁵ The Liao dynasty mannequins are carved from individual solid pieces of wood connected by axle joints and socket joints, which can be used to pose the figure in different positions, making them very similar in construction to moveable arm crucifixes (compare fig. 13 & fig. 14).¹⁶ The hands and faces of Liao Dynasty mannequins are rendered with particular care, and contain more detail and more naturalistic curves than their plain boxy torsos, since only the hands and head would be shown when the mannequins were dressed (see fig. 15). In contrast, moveable arms crucifixes tend to be detailed throughout because Christ on the cross is typically depicted wearing only a loincloth (see fig. 2). Life-sized poseable mannequins in the East share the West's concern with naturalism, illustrating that there is a shared cross-cultural sense of what makes a sculpture lifelike.

The *Cristo de Burgos* contains a cavity in its torso as well. However, unlike the Liao dynasty mannequins, it does not hold ashes but instead contains a small metal vessel intended to contain animal blood. This vessel is positioned in such a way that the blood it contains will ooze from Christ's side wound.¹⁷ This creates a gory display capable of potently reminding viewers of the enormous suffering Christ experienced on the cross. The *Cristo de Burgos* not only resembles Christ, but also references the internal physicality of Christ's earthly body through the use of kinetic blood.

Unlike the *Cristo de Burgos*, the Buddha of Seiryōji is not poseable but does have other anthropomorphic characteristics. One of the biggest differences between

this object and the Song dynasty bronze acupuncture mannequins is in their posture and gesture (compare figs 1 & 5). Although it is difficult to see on the above-eye-level altarpiece upon which the Buddha of Seiryōji rests, the body of the sculpture actually leans forward quite noticeably (see fig. 16). Additionally, unlike the bronze acupuncture mannequin that has its arms stiffly positioned at its side, the Buddha of Seiryōji's hand is raised in a gesture of teaching.¹⁸ The combination of this hand gesture and the sculpture's forward leaning posture creates an engaged pose that feels much more lifelike than the clinical pose of the Song Dynasty bronze acupuncture mannequins.

The Buddha of Seiryōji sculpture also references medieval Chinese medical practice through the use of conventions native to the anatomically themed artwork of medieval China. The cavity (see fig. 17) of the Buddha of Seiryōji holds a variety of objects associated with religious offerings, such as mirrors, incense, prayers, prints, and coins (see fig. 18) intended to venerate and enhance the sacred power of the sculpture.¹⁹ However, the largest and most interesting set of objects contained within this cavity descend as much from the East's medical tradition as from its religious tradition. Within the Buddha of Seiryōji are placed nearly life-sized silk models of human internal organs.

These intricate models reflect China's medical knowledge of the internal torso as reflected in the prints of Yanluozi. The organs come in an array of flesh tones and are covered in inscriptions (see figs. 19 & 20). They have been crafted with such care and attention to detail that many scholars believe they can link the different models to the actual internal organs they represent, both because of the models' fidelity to actual internal organs and because they share conventions of other tools of medical instruction in China.²⁰ Internal organs, particularly the stomach, are often rendered in a multi-petal "flower" shape in Chinese Medieval art.²¹ The Buddha of Seiryōji's largest internal organ model takes this distinctive "flower" shape (see fig. 20), reflecting the conventions of Medieval Chinese

anatomical renderings (compare figs. 4 & 21). The Buddha of Seiryōji reflects the medical knowledge of medieval China in both its fidelity to the human form and its use of conventions common to Chinese Medieval anatomical art.

WITHIN THEIR RITUAL CONTEXT

As has been discussed, both the Cristo de Burgos and the Buddha of Seiryōji have formal linkages to anatomy, but it can be difficult to understand why they were made this way. For example, why does the Buddha of Seiryōji contain such precious and beautiful objects without displaying them? And why does the Cristo de Burgos have such a complex and fragile mechanism for movement? In order to make the case that the anatomical characteristics of these two objects are intended to enhance their spiritual power this article will now turn to discussing how those stylistic qualities come into play during the rituals in which these objects are venerated.

Among the earliest examples of moveable-arm Christ sculptures from the 14th century are examples of moveable-arm Christ figures paired with “Pietas,” sculptures of the Madonna mourning Christ’s crucifixion while holding her deceased son in her lap (see fig. 22). This indicates that an early rationale for moveable arm joints on sculptures of Christ was so that they could be transitioned from an arms-spread position when displayed on a cross to an arms-at-the-side position when placed in the arms of the Virgin during liturgical plays.²² However, the moveable joints of these sculptures were not purely utilitarian, since there are contemporary examples of mechanized devotional icons in which their movement is more theatrical than useful. For example, moveable arms crucifixes are contemporaneous with sculptures of the Madonna and child in which the Christ child has a moveable head positioned on a dowel wrapped with string, which is tugged on to change the position of the Christ child’s head (see fig. 23).²³ Animated devotional icons of Christ, became popular in the early gothic due

to their theatricality, reflecting an earlier European fascination with mechanics.²⁴

Although the mechanical aspects of moveable arms Christ sculptures may have been born out of a desire for novelty and theatricality, their subject and display locations emphasize that their purpose is one of religious devotion. The Cristo de Burgos spends the majority of its time displayed in the Cathedral of Burgos in Burgos, Spain. It is prominently displayed in the church, forming the focal point of the Chapel’s main altar (see fig. 24). This central placement insinuates that the Cristo de Burgos is meant to be looked at by worshippers, so that its outwardly apparent naturalistic qualities, such as its hair, lifelike skin, and gaping wounds, force onlookers to dramatically experience Christ’s passion. The mechanistic and naturalistic aspects of the Cristo de Burgos were chosen for religious reasons, namely animating the figure of Christ to provoke wonder and awe during religious ceremonies.

The Cristo de Burgos’ purpose as reflected in its design is best captured by its use in processions, in which the object is animated through its use in ritual. During religious festivals moveable arm Christ sculptures are paraded through the streets to the accompaniment of chants and song (see fig. 25). For example, movable arms crucifixes are often used during processions on Good Friday in which the crucifix is paraded through the streets, and at the end the Christ figure is removed to be laid to rest in a sepulcher. This ritual procession references the religious significance of Good Friday as the day Christ was crucified and buried.²⁵ These processions may even include the movable arms Christ sculpture being laid on the lap of an actress playing the Virgin Mary, harkening back to the early moveable arms Christ sculptures that were paired with Pietas.²⁶ The frenzy and movements of processions, as well as the proximity between the sculpture and believers during this ritual, enhances the drama imparted by the naturalism of this sculpture. This ultimately creates a spectacle which animates the statue, making the symbolic meaning it carries feel tangible and urgent.

In contrast to the public display of the Cristo de Burgos, the Buddha of Seiryōji is used in more meditative private worship. The sculpture is actually rarely seen, residing in a closed-off space in the Seiryōji Temple in Kyoto, Japan (see figs. 26 & 27). The object is only rarely viewed, and there is no indication that the items that reside within the sculpture are ever taken out for display. Rather, the objects within the sculpture are considered to enliven the sculpture merely by their presence within it, in particular the internal organs which are associated with Daoist teachings.²⁷ It is the materiality of the Buddha of Seiryōji and its internal inclusions which gives it its spiritual presence.

CONCLUSION

Anatomical knowledge informed how medieval people in both the East and the West chose to enliven their sacred depictions of the divine body. By understanding both the Cristo de Burgos and the Buddha of Seiryōji in their cultural and ritual context we can better understand what purpose lies behind their formal qualities which reference medical anatomical knowledge. New Materialism provides an object-oriented set of concerns through which to appreciate the spiritual power of these objects inherent in their physical forms.

The main difference in how these object's reference the anatomical is their concern for visibility. The Western object, the Cristo de Burgos, has its plainly visible references to anatomy. The calfskin covering the figure, its hair, and the gruesome wounds with dripping blood that cover the body, are all qualities that project outward, allowing the "humanness" of this depiction of Christ to be readily observed by those worshiping in its presence. In contrast, The Buddha of Seiryōji has its most striking reference to anatomy hidden from sight. Within the statue are painstakingly crafted silk models of internal organs which are highly realistic, especially when viewed in light of the anatomical knowledge of the day. These models and the offerings of incense and other things that accompany them are not meant to be

seen. It is materiality, not performance, that imbues the Buddha of Seiryōji with its vitality.

The ritual way in which these objects are venerated mirrors the public or private valence of their anatomical formal qualities. While the Cristo de Burgos is revered through public procession, accruing its power through being seen, the Buddha of Seiryōji is hidden from public view, gaining power through enigma. While these two objects are diametrically opposed in terms of how they are displayed and experienced, they both draw upon anatomical knowledge and the conventions of anatomical depiction to strengthen their lifelike presence.

Being understood as human in some way, or at least as alive, grants the objects the ability to animate their representation of Christ or Buddha. This in turn enhances their ability to elicit emotion and therefore their sacredness in the eyes of the viewer. They make these sacred figures feel tangibly present, allowing the worshipper to encounter the divine spirit "in the flesh."

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Rachel wrote this manuscript in Spring 2016 for HART 376: East/West Medieval Visual Culture. Her research interest is ancient art, meaning artifacts that provide insight into the origin of symbolic thought. "Gods Among Us" was the first real art history research paper she wrote after recognizing that devotional icons and religious art in general can be overlooked as a source material for studying the origins of anatomical sciences and medicine. Through this paper, she found her interest in the subject of art history and will continue studying art history next semester at the University of Chicago as she pursues her doctorate. She would like to thank Rice Asian Studies Review for highlighting the unique histories and foundational contributions made by people from Asia.

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Finding Söndök: Uncovering a Female King through Samguk Sagi and Samguk Yusa

Christina J. Hahn

ABSTRACT

One of only three females to be listed in *Samguk sagi*'s "kings list," King Söndök was widely hailed as a ruler full of wisdom and virtue who promoted the arts, sponsored Buddhism, and built the foundations for the Silla unification of the three kingdoms through her astute foreign diplomacy. This article attempts to use the portrayal of this female king of the Silla Dynasty of Korea to explore the importance of contemporary conceptions of gender and power when studying primary sources. The author examines the context in which two significant histories were written, one in the era in which the events took place and another in the following dynasty. Through a comparative analysis of the portrayal of King Söndök in each text, including a detailed background on the respective authors, this article explores the implications of recording the lives and actions of famous women as the position of women in society fluctuates with time.

INTRODUCTION

Söndök (r. 632-647) was the first female king¹ and 27th ruler of the Korean Peninsula's Silla dynasty (57 BC-935 BCE). She was selected by the court and her father to succeed the throne due to his lack of a male heir² in the sönggol³ (holy bone) rank. One of only three females to be listed in *Samguk sagi*'s "kings list,"⁴ King Söndök was widely hailed as a ruler full of wisdom and virtue who promoted the arts, sponsored Buddhism, and built the foundations for the Silla unification of the three kingdoms⁵ through her astute foreign diplomacy.⁶ The primary characteristics for which she was known are divine wisdom, intelligent political strategy, and all-encompassing compassion.

During her lifetime, King Söndök foretold three prophecies which then reportedly came true, and for which she came to be regarded as possessing divine wisdom. The first prophecy was her prediction that peonies from T'ang China would be scentless, after gazing at a painting of them. The second prophecy was her interpretation that the croaking of frogs at a certain pond signified the encroaching attack of Paekche soldiers from the west. The third prophecy, made near her death, was King Söndök's prediction of her time of death and location of her burial.

King Söndök's strategic thinking was highlighted through her consistent maintenance of important political relations. Domestically, she cemented the relationship between the two politically and militarily powerful families of Kim Kim Ch'un'ch'u (later T'aejong Muyöl the Great) and renowned General Kim Yu Shin through arranging the marriage of Kim Ch'un'ch'u to Yu-sin's sister⁷. The combined force of these two clans allowed for a centralization of power in Silla, enabling the nobles to act as a unified body towards their counterparts in rival states Paekche and Koguryö. King Söndök balanced diplomatic relations to Silla's strategic advantage with foreign powers, as well. Initially, when Paekche attacked Silla, she cultivated an alliance with Koguryö. However, when Paekche and Koguryö allied with one another to attack Silla, King Söndök changed tactics and began to cultivate friendly relations with T'ang China to repel her rival neighbors. She accomplished this by regularly sending royal emissaries and noble students to T'ang China⁸, as well as building the Hwangryongsa Pagoda as a strategic display of aggression towards her enemies and a commitment to dynastic security. This nine-story pagoda, a full eighty meters in height, listed each of Silla's nine neighbors that the dynasty sought to dominate⁹.

Finally, King Söndök's compassion was displayed in her domestic policy. She focused on the wellbeing of commoners, and her kindness to lowly admirers became legendary. Her agenda for her court who dealt with internal affairs was to decrease poverty and increase welfare for the peasant classes.¹⁰ She continued to use buildings as symbolic and literal manifestations of her policies when she built the Ch'ömsöngdae observatory, which was used for agriculture¹¹. Where the Hwangnyongsa was a reflection of her foreign policy that aspired to dominate Silla's neighbors, the Ch'ömsöngdae was a reflection of her domestic policy which sought to encourage agriculture and the livelihood of the common people. In a legend in which a commoner by the name of Jigwi waited day and night for a glimpse of King Söndök but fell asleep before she arrived to the temple, King Söndök allegedly left her bracelet as a show of acknowledgement on his chest¹². This tale illustrates how King Söndök did not brush off commoners, but acknowledged them and treated them with kindness. Since her rule, King Söndök has been recorded, reprimanded, and reimagined in various incarnations, by scholars and laypeople alike, throughout different eras of Korean history.

The purpose of this paper is to find the various ways in which King Söndök and her reign have been translated, recorded, and imagined. More specifically, this paper will explore the ways in which two of the oldest works on Korean history, *Samguk sagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms) and *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms) portrayed her. There will be a specific focus on use of language of the authors of these works with consideration of the conceptions of gender and power at the time.

We will begin by exploring the historical context of the Silla and Koryŏ dynasties and their conceptions of gender and power. We will then learn the context in which *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa* were written. Once these foundations have been set, we will examine instances in which King Söndök appears in the text, and how she portrayed. Finally, we will conclude with

a comparative analysis of themes in the portrayals of King Söndök in these texts. Through this exploration, this paper seeks to gain a better understanding of King Söndök as a historical figure, the historical conceptions of gender and power during the Silla and Koryŏ dynasties, and how these conceptions shaped historical portrayals and writing.

SILLA CONCEPTIONS OF GENDER AND POWER

The Silla dynasty (57 BCE-935 CE) was a kingdom that rose out of a chieftom in the southeastern Korean peninsula. Though it was founded by three ruling families that rotated the succession to the throne, it eventually was monopolized by the Naemul Kim clan.¹³ The early Silla dynasty practiced shamanism as could be signified by their origin myth of a divine princess¹⁴ and prince¹⁵ coming together in marriage and starting a kingdom¹⁶ as well as the shape of the royal crown which featured stylized deer antlers and bear claws¹⁷, reminiscent of shaman leaders throughout Central Asia.¹⁸ It was during the middle of the Silla dynasty that Buddhism became the state religion and a source for establishing divine legitimacy to the throne. Buddhism was able to make a smooth transition from China into the native tradition of Korea through its ability to absorb the native shamanistic traditions and beliefs.¹⁹

Even before King Söndök, there was historical precedent for women holding power in Silla through religion. The prominence of shamanism, which in the Silla context featured a majority female leadership, and Buddhism, which encouraged generally egalitarian relations between sexes in Silla society, meant that Silla women held a relatively high social status, on par with that of their male counterparts. Before Silla kings adopted the term "wang" (Chinese for king), early rulers often used "chachaung" or shaman as their title.²⁰ Molony, Thiess, and Choi describe the role of the shaman as one who mediates between heaven and earth, drives away bad spirits, and brings good fortune.²¹ Many

indigenous ceremonies and worship revolved around divine beings in female forms. Aro, the daughter of the founder of Silla and sister to the second king of Silla, was one of the most famous female priests of Silla, and eventually rose to become the highest religious leader in the kingdom. Molony, Theiss, and Choi speculate that this may indicate a division of leadership roles in early Silla of women to the religious and ceremonial realms and men to the military realm.²²

Another aspect of Silla society that reflected the position of women in society was the practice of matrilineal traditions such as tracing the lineage of a child through both maternal and paternal lines to determine their social status, having married couples take residence in the wife's native home, and the equal inheritance practice of land and slaves between siblings regardless of gender.²³ From stories of noble women traveling on horseback in *Samguk yusa*, it can also be determined that women were allowed to move freely in the Silla dynasty.²⁴ A woman of an equal bone-rank to her husband could not be displaced by a woman who was of a lower bone-rank on the whim of her husband.²⁵ Marriage, in this context, was a partnership between social equals.

Finally, archeological evidence uncovered from the burial sites of Silla royalty suggests that early Silla practiced complementary pairings of rule. Some scholars suggest there could have been a division of leadership between men and women in the religious and military realms -- in the roles of kings and queens. It is known that the Japanese islands of early Silla times often practiced co-rule of a queen and king pairing, and some Japanese scholars have suggested that this was customary of Paekche and Silla as well.²⁶ The burial of kings and queens in married pairs in identical tombs side by side²⁷ suggests a partnership of rule.²⁸ Further, in an equally bone-ranked marriage, the tombs of both king and queen were equally extravagant. The sex differentiation was indicated only by the inclusion or absence of a sword.²⁹ The inclusion of a sword indicated a male tomb. Further, *Samguk yusa* stated that

the indication of a ruler was through his or her golden crown and belt. There have been tombs uncovered in which the female tomb carried the golden crown and her husband carried the silver crown with a sword³⁰. This suggests that a woman was recognized as king in her own right.

Power in Silla was determined by bloodline through the bone-rank system and often perpetuated by the divinity bestowed upon kings through shamanistic ritual and Buddhism. The bone-rank system (kolp'um) was a code that used bloodline as a means of dividing society and creating limitations for the occupations an individual could hold, the clothes they could wear, and the possessions they could own.³¹ The bone-rank system had eight different levels. The Holy Bone (sǒnggol) were at the top of the hierarchy; they consisted of the royal house Kim and were the only ones eligible to inherit the throne. The True Bone (chin'gol) were directly below; they were nobility that were of the house Kim but not able to succeed the throne. The True Bones were, however, able to act as heads of government and other high-ranking military posts. Below the True Bones were Head Ranks 6, 5, and 4. Head Rank 4 members were those that occupied the lower ranks of governmental offices. Finally, head ranks 3, 2, and 1 consisted of the commoners and those with no privileges.³² The Silla dynasty had a strict social hierarchy which composed of an aristocratic state centered around a monarchy.³³ The monarchy sought to further distinguish itself from its nobility through strategically using Buddhism as its state religion. Silla kings stylized themselves as the wheel-turning kings of the Ksatriya caste. The most explicit display of this was when King Chinp'yǒng (r.579-362) named himself Suddhodana and his wife Maya. Sǒndǒk, his daughter, took the Buddhist name of Srimala.³⁴

Despite the centralization of monarchical power, it should be noted that the Silla dynasty practiced the political tradition of sharing monarchical political power with a council of nobles in its day to day deliberations and ruling of the state. The Hwabaek

(Council of Nobles) consisted of an “Extraordinary Rank 1” noble, who was appointed by the ruler, who headed a council of “Extraordinary Rank 2” nobles. Together, the Hwabaek would deliberate on important state matters such as throne succession and war declarations. The Hwabaek convened at religious sites, and made decisions unanimously.³⁵ In addition to the Hwabaek, the Silla rulers also relied on the Hwarang (Flower Youth), a group of elite noble youth that headed the military. These youths were famed for their beauty, religious virtue, loyalty to the king, and military strength.³⁶

In sum, conceptions of power overruled conceptions of gender in the treatment of women and their status in Silla society. Religious tradition and bloodline acted as stronger determinants for power than a person’s sex. In addition, the support of a ruler’s council of nobles and military was necessary for a ruler’s sustained maintenance of the throne, suggesting that Söndök’s succession to the throne was supported by her majority male court.

KORYŎ CONCEPTIONS OF GENDER AND POWER

The Koryŏ dynasty (918-1382) was the successor to a unified Korean peninsula left by the Unified Silla dynasty. Its founder, King T’aejo (r. 918-943) also known as Wang Kŏn, was a man of Koguryŏ descent. Koryŏ was influenced by its Buddhist heritage from the Silla dynasty as well as the incoming influence of the increasingly powerful Confucianism from Yuan China (1271-1368) and later Ming China (1368-1644)³⁷. Overall, Koryŏ was a strongly Buddhist society that centered most of its cultural and social activities around Buddhism. Additionally, the state sponsored Buddhism and many Buddhist monasteries owned vast land holdings. Buddhist monks in turn contributed to the security of the Koryŏ state through ritual protection prayers and even fighting for the Koryŏ state at times.³⁸ Similar to Silla society, Koryŏ society was a hereditary aristocracy that consisted of distinct classes:

the yangban, meaning the two types of noble elite that acted as military or civil officials; the sangmin, the commoner middle class of famers, tenants, merchants, and craftsmen; and the chunmin, the lowborn class that were comprised mostly of slaves.³⁹

According to historian Martina Deuchler, women held a relatively equal status to their male counterparts during the Koryŏ dynasty. Women were able to head households, inherit property equally with their siblings regardless of gender or birth order, travel outside, and were generally not stigmatized for divorce or remarriage. When a woman died, her property was passed on to her siblings and children rather than her husband. With regard to marriage, the woman’s family was not required to pay a dowry, and marriage ceremonies took place in the woman’s home. Women were married at an average age of 17 to men of the average of 20, and the married couple would reside at the woman’s house until she was 30 years old. The relatively small age gap between the married couple suggests a relatively equal spousal partnership. Genealogies would also include matrilineal as well as patrilineal records. Finally, in line with Silla tradition, the status of a child would be traced and determined by considering both matrilineal and patrilineal descent.⁴⁰ However, it should be noted that during the Koryŏ dynasty, there was a departure from the shaman traditions of the Silla dynasty with the increased embrace of Buddhism and later Confucianism. Whereas shamanism had allowed for female leadership in religion, Buddhism did not allow for the leadership of women outside of the congregation and service as nuns.⁴¹

The relatively high status of Koryŏ women meant that conceptions of power in the Koryŏ dynasty were also determined by the influence they gained through marriages. Power as a whole in Koryŏ was defined by class, gender, age, and cognizance of external influences that could threaten the Koryŏ dynasty. As mentioned above, Koryŏ was a hereditary aristocracy where bloodline determined the career and status of a person. Succession to the throne was determined as follows:

eldest legitimate son, eldest legitimate grandson, then the second legitimate son, and the eldest legitimate son of the second legitimate son, the illegitimate grandson, and finally the female child but only through her own son.⁴² In terms of external influences, we see the transition that the Koryŏ court made from fully embracing Buddhism as the state religion when the legacy of Silla was still strong, to slowly incorporating more elements of Confucianism in parts of state ideology as Koryŏ began to establish stronger relations with Ming China in the later half of the dynasty.⁴³

Marriage as a source of power in Koryŏ was clearly demonstrated by the dynasty's founder, King T'aejo. He used a series of strategic marriages to the daughters of wealthy and powerful families to consolidate and unify state power. In total, King T'aejo had 29 wives, three of which were "queen dowagers," three of which were "queen consorts," and twenty-three of which were "ladies." The six queens were all considered to be official wives with little difference in status among them.⁴⁴ Although this situation of multiple marriages may be interpreted as the attempts of noble families to offer their daughters as tribute to gain political power themselves, it should be noted that within Koryŏ society where it was a common practice for son-in-laws to be treated as sons. They shared their parents-in-law's activities as well as bearing the honor, shame, and penalties of the family and sometimes even being raised in their in-laws' homes⁴⁵. Considered in this light, King T'aejo's marriages were in part offering himself as tribute to these families in exchange for their powerful alliances.

The power that women held in Koryŏ society, especially through marriage bonds, is highlighted in the following anecdote from *The History of Koryŏ (Koryŏsa)*. When King T'aejo was engaged in sexual relations with the daughter of a wealthy nobleman, he did not wish to have a child by her (Lady Oh) due to the fact that her family was not politically prestigious enough. As a result, he ejaculated onto the mat but Lady Oh quickly took in his semen and became pregnant with the child who would later become King Hyejong.⁴⁶ This

understanding that if he were to get her pregnant, he would have to take her in marriage and acknowledge the child due to his noble birth displays the importance of women in Koryŏ. He could not simply abandon her to be disgraced due to the power of her family. Of King T'aejo's officially recognized twenty-five sons and nine daughters, eleven of the sons were referred to as "crown princes." This indicates that all eleven of these princes considered themselves to be successors to the throne due to the legitimacy of the powerful families of their mothers.⁴⁷ In sum, though the status of women had decreased in terms of their ability to hold official and public positions of leadership, Koryŏ women still held considerable power in their importance as bridges for significant alliances as daughters, wives, and mothers.

BACKGROUND OF THE SAMGUK SAGI AND SAMGUK YUSA

Before examining the various portrayals of Female King Sŏndŏk, we must first understand the historical context in which the two sources, *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, were produced.

Samguk sagi, was written in 1145 by Kim Pusik (1075-1151) during the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392). It is one of Korea's oldest surviving written histories and is widely regarded as an invaluable source of ancient Korean history. Kim Pusik was a scholar-official of the Koryŏ dynasty who was of noble Silla descent. King Kim I Jong of Koryŏ (r. 1112-1146) commanded Kim to produce this work. In writing the *Samguk sagi*, Kim relates a history of the Three Kingdoms that outlined their origins, their unification by Silla, unified Silla's downfall, and the rise of the Koryŏ dynasty as its successor. Following the orthodox Confucian practice of historical writing, Kim used the Chinese Kijon format which consisted of annals, treatises on various topics, and selected biographies of kings and other relevant figures.⁴⁸ Kim Pusik was well-versed in both Buddhist and Confucian lines of thought and expressed them through his writing. He believed that the purpose of history was to educate leaders in governance, and oneself in self-improvement.⁴⁹ For this reason, Kim includes his personal

commentary—another historical writing tradition of the time—to “praise and blame.”⁵⁰

Some modern scholars have criticized Kim’s southern orientation of Korean history. They maintain that Kim’s focus on the history of the peninsula, as opposed to the more northern areas of the mainland, limited the geographic scope of Korean history and was thus un-nationalistic.⁵¹ Kim has also been critiqued by these scholars for holding positive sentiments towards Yuan China through his emphasis on Korean tributary relations with China⁵². However, historian Stella Xu argues that Kim’s writing was reflective of an acute political awareness of state relations. She asserts that his non-inclusion of the histories of earlier dynasties that reached deeper into mainland Asia and into the territories of Chinese dynasties was out of political tact rather than a lack of nationalism.⁵³

Samguk yusa was written in 1281 by Iryŏn (1206-1289), a Buddhist monk of the Koryŏ dynasty. Along with *Samguk yusa*, it is one of the oldest surviving written works on ancient Korean history. Unlike its earlier counterpart, *Samguk yusa* is also a collection of myths, legends, and anecdotes as well as histories of the Three Kingdoms. The Yuan emperor at the time commanded King Ch’ungyŏl (r. 1274-1308) to provide a comprehensive report on Koryŏ. King Ch’ungyŏl thus commanded a national history to be compiled.⁵⁴ What is notable about the *Samguk yusa* is that Iryŏn was not a conventional producer of historical works for the time. He was not a member of the Confucian literati class of the Koryŏ court. Nonetheless, he applied Chinese literary tradition to structure his work. Iryŏn used the Chinese *yishi* structure—a collection of informal narratives and anecdotes—to produce a history with more flexibility both structurally and organizationally.⁵⁵

Samguk yusa is often dismissed as a serious source for Korean history due to its inclusion of various supernatural myths and origin stories. Additionally, Iryŏn’s promotion of Buddhism due to his status as a prominent Buddhist monk should be noted. In the same vein, Iryŏn has been critiqued for praising Silla

excessively, as the Silla dynasty had been a paragon of Buddhist-state promotion.

In sum, from *Samguk sagi* we should expect both Confucian and Buddhist ideological opinions in the form of chronological records; and from *Samguk yusa* we should expect more sensationalized stories of important historical figures with strong Buddhist influences.

KING SÖNDÖK IN SAMGUK SAGI AND SAMGUK YUSA

Samguk sagi provides a comprehensive account of King Söndök’s life and reign, documenting every year of her sixteen-year rule. In total, King Söndök is recorded as having performed roughly sixteen distinct acts as “queen.” It is interesting to note that one of the first actions that King Söndök is recorded as doing is leading a ritual sacrifice, which is aligned with the Silla practice of having female leaders of religion. Her court is recorded as having performed ten actions: holding sacrifices, proclaiming general amnesty, exempting taxes, appointing people as the head of the Hwabaek, commanding generals to lead troops, ordering generals to assemble and reassure people, sending noble sons as scholar-ambassadors to the T’ang dynasty, sending foreign envoys to request for military assistance, approving nobles’ requests, and finally, dying. The court on the other hand executed the following actions: overseeing administration of governmental affairs, sending officials to inquire the state and conditions of the country, and sending envoys to Great T’ang to present tribute and local goods. Already, through the differences in these verbs, we are able to identify the role of the Hwabaek as dealing with domestic affairs and diplomatic niceties. Söndök, on the other hand, is primarily preoccupied with religious activities, military strategies, and ensuring the overall well being of her subjects. Though King Söndök is portrayed as less involved with everyday domestic issues, she is clearly the executive head of state as seen through the duties she performed.

Though King Söndök dominates the action in the text, in terms of dialogue she only speaks three distinct times. These moments are when she interprets the meaning of the peony painting, when she interprets the meaning of the croaking bullfrogs, and when she pleads with General Yu Shin to go back into battle. Her contemporary, Emperor T'ai-tsung of the T'ang dynasty, on the other hand, is featured in two distinct instances of dialogue which span at least a page in length each--far longer than King Söndök's three instances of dialogue combined. T'ai-tsung's dialogue critiques the rule of a woman, though this may be a reflection Kim Pusik's personal interpretation of the situation. Finally, there are six other instances of dialogue by various different officials, envoys, and generals.

Samguk yusa on the other hand begins with a brief introduction to King Söndök and her lineage, and explores only her prophecies at any depth. It is important to note that as a work written after *Samguk sagi*, the *Samguk yusa* was definitely influenced by the undertones of Kim Pusik's authorship.⁵⁷

Below is the introduction to King Söndök in *Samguk sagi*:

Queen Söndök was enthroned [632]. Her personal name was Tongman and she was the oldest daughter of King Chinpyöng. Her mother, Lady Maya, was of the Kim lineage. Tongman by nature was generous, humane, and intelligent. When the King died without a son, the people of the country enthroned Tokman and gave her the title Sonjo hwanggo.⁵⁸

Kim Pusik includes King Söndök's paternal and maternal lineage and records her nature as "generous, humane, and intelligent." Though "generous" and "humane" could be attributed to more feminine characteristics that were praised in this era, it is important to note that Kim acknowledged her intelligence. Further, despite the fact that he underlines the King's death without a male heir as the reason for her ascension to the throne, we also see that her accession to the throne is attributed to the "people of

the country." This suggests that King Söndök had the support of her court and people as ruler.

Below is the introduction to King Söndök in *Samguk yusa*:

The twenty-seventh sovereign of Silla was Queen Tokman (post-humous title Söndök, 632-647). She was the daughter of King Chin-p'yong and ascended the throne in the sixth year of Chen-kuan of T'ang T'ai-tsung. During her reign she made three remarkable prophecies.⁵⁹

It was also this queen who built the stone astronomical observatory called Ch'omsong-dae.⁶⁰

Queen Tokman, daughter of Chinpyöng and Lady Maya. Succeeded when her father died without male issue. Prince consort Um Kalmun-wang. Her reign title was Inpyong.⁶¹

Iryön also includes King Söndök's maternal and paternal lineage, and interestingly enough includes her contemporary counterpart in T'ang China as a further reference to her rule. He does not include any explicit mention of her characteristics, but rather includes her actions and accomplishments such as her remarkable prophecies and the construction of the Ch'omsongdae observatory. Iryön also mentions her father's death without a male heir as a reason for Söndök's ascension. However, unlike Kim Pusik, he does not mention the will of the people as having had a role in her ascension.

The next two extracts present a comparative description of King Söndök's first prophecy: the scentless peonies. Below is the prophecy in *Samguk sagi*:

In the time of the former King, he obtained from China a painting of peonies and some peony seeds which he showed to Tongman. Tongman said, "although these flowers appear to be very beautiful, they must have no fragrance." The King laughed saying, "How do you know this?" She replied, "The flowers are painted without butterflies, so I know this. Generally, if girls are extremely beautiful, boys will follow them. If flowers have fragrance, the bees and butterflies will follow. Accordingly, although these flowers are very

beautiful, in designing the painting without bees or butterflies, they must be flowers without fragrance.” In planting the flower seeds, it was ultimately as she had said. Her prescience was like this.⁶²

Kim Pusik’s account of the tale suggests that the King was not paid his respects by the T’ang Emperor via a gift of peonies, the symbolic flower of the T’ang Dynasty. The dialogue in which King Söndök attributes only great beauty to the value of girls suggests the presence of gender norms in which women were valued aesthetically. However, her ability to speak freely to her father the king and to gain his recognition as a young girl also signifies the respect with which she was treated. Kim Pusik even acknowledges her prescience in the last line of the paragraph.

Below is the story of the same prophecy in *Samguk yusa*:

First, the Emperor T’ai-tsung (of the Chinese T’ang dynasty) sent her a gift of three handfuls of peony seeds with a picture of the flowers in red, white and purple. The Queen looked at the picture for a while and said, ‘The flowers will have no fragrance.’ The peonies were planted in the palace garden, and sure enough they had no odor from the time they bloomed until they faded.⁶³

During her lifetime the courtiers asked the Queen how she had been able to make these prophecies. She replied: “In the picture there were flowers but not butterflies, an indication that peonies have no smell. The T’ang Emperor teased my having no husband.”⁶⁴

Iryön paints a more explicit relationship of respect by T’ang China to Silla Korea by having the T’ang Emperor T’ai-tsung gift the painting and peony seeds to King Söndök herself. This gift from a more powerful state could signify respect and a desire to establish diplomatic relations. Further, King Söndök’s interpretation of the gift itself also speaks volumes. Unlike with Pusik’s rendering, there is no flowery dialogue regarding beauty nor the love of boys for girls. King Söndök simply asserts that there will be no scent,

and it was so. Later, the courtiers ask for an explanation -- King Söndök on explains that she interpreted the gift as a criticism of herself as a woman with no husband. Criticism regarding King Söndök’s womanhood by Emperor T’ai-tsung is also mentioned by Kim Pusik later on in *Samguk sagi*: [T’ang Emperor says] “I can deploy several tens of hundreds of ships loaded with armed soldiers, silently cross the sea, and directly attack that country. But because your country has a woman as a ruler, neighboring states belittle it. As you have lost the authority of the ruler, thus inviting the enemy to attack, no year will enjoy peace.”⁶⁵

Kim Pusik’s portrayal of the prophecy sets the foundation for asserting King Söndök’s prescience from a young age while Iryön’s asserts King Söndök’s almost divine wisdom by which she states a prophecy which subsequently comes true. The latter promotes King Söndök’s sanctity as a divine Buddhist ruler, which is in line with Iryön’s intentions.

The next two events in the texts that we will compare are King Söndök’s second prophecy: the croaking frogs. Below is the prophecy in *Samguk sagi*:

Summer, fifth month. Frogs gathered in a great number west of the palace at Jade Gate Pond. The Queen, hearing this, called her attendants, saying, “The bull frogs have anger in their eyes looking like that of soldiers. I once heard in the southwestern region there was a place called ‘Jade Gate Valley.’ Have perhaps some neighboring country’s troops secretly infiltrated there?” She commanded General Alch’on and P’ilt’an to lead troops to go and search for them. As expected, Paekche General Uso, wishing to lead a raid on Mount Toksan Fortress, led five hundred armed troops who came hiding there. Alch’on made a surprise attack killing them all.⁶⁶

Kim Pusik’s account features King Söndök hearing of a gathering of bullfrogs at the Jade Gate Pond. She interprets the anger in their eyes to be that of soldiers and also associates the Jade Gate Pond as the southwestern region of the Jade Gate Valley. She then

commands her officers to lead an attack. She correctly interpreted the situation, and her men were able to defeat the Paekche soldiers. The language that King Söndök uses features a softening of assertions and many conditional phrases such as “I once heard,” and “Have perhaps.” These indicate a more feminine approach in asserting her interpretation of the situation.

Below is the prophecy in *Samguk yusa*:

Second, in the Jade Gate Pond at the Holy Shrine Temple a crowd of frogs gathered in winter⁶⁷ and croaked for three of four days. The people and courtiers wondered at this, and asked the Queen what its significance might be. She immediately commanded two generals, Alch'on and P'ilt'an, to lead two thousand crack troops to Woman's Root Valley on the western outskirts of Kyongju to search out and kill enemy troops hidden in the forest.

The generals set off with a thousand troops each, and when they reached the valley found five hundred Paekche soldiers hidden in the forest there. The Silla soldiers surrounded them and killed them all. Then they found a Paekche general hiding behind a rock on South Mountain, whom they also killed. Finally, they intercepted a large Paekche force marching to invade Silla. This they routed, killing one thousand three hundred in the process.⁶⁸

[She replied]...Jade gate refers to the female genitals⁶⁹. The female color is white, which is also the color symbolic of the west, so I knew the invaders were coming from the west⁷⁰. If a male organ enters a female organ it will surely die⁷¹ so I knew it would be easy to defeat the enemy.⁷²

In Iryön's account, on the other hand, the people ask King Söndök about the meaning of the frogs at the pond. She is able to interpret the cosmological significance of croaking frogs at a specific location and translate that into military action. This formation of the story puts King Söndök in a more active role, gathering the information herself. Notably, the Silla people and courtiers asked Seondeok about the significance of the

croaking frogs. Seondeok was trusted and expected to understand the situation and explain it to her subjects. Another important point is the fact that her subsequent military commands went unquestioned and were implemented immediately by her male generals. Iryön does not mention any sort of deliberation that could have occurred between King Söndök and her courtiers. The language of the text illustrates her decisiveness and competence as a ruler. The usage of the word “commanded” suggests the masculine nature of her reaction, which renders her depiction as consistent with those of male kings. Her response reveals a deep understanding of natural cosmology and an unabashed discussion of coitus and the physiology of sexes. In this instance, the term “surely die” refers to when a penis is no longer erect upon ejaculation. King Söndök's prowess for cosmological interpretation highlights her wisdom and spirituality. Iryön's characterization of Söndök and her prophecy once again showcases her wisdom, but this time with an element of decisive leadership. King Söndök's intellect and actions are mythologized, not her gender nor her physical being.

Both authors give King Söndök credit for interpreting the situation correctly and dispatching troops accordingly. However, Kim Pusik shies away from the explanatory aspect of the tale, while Iryön focuses on the cosmological foundations of King Söndök's interpretation, giving her further credit as a religious and divine expert.

The third prophecy is only mentioned by Iryön and is the following:

Third, one day while the Queen was still in perfect health, she called her courtiers together and said, ‘I will surely die in a certain year, in a certain month, on a certain day. When I am gone, bury me in the middle of Torich'on.’ The courtiers did not know the place and asked the Queen where it was, whereupon she pointed to the southern hill called Wolf Mountain.... On the very day she had predicted the Queen died, and her ashes were interred on the site she had chosen. Ten years later (656) the great King Munmu had Sach'onwang Temple (The Temple of the Four Deva

Kings) built beneath the Queen's tomb. Buddhist scripture alludes to two heavens called –Torich'on and Sach'onwangch'on. All were amazed at the Queen's prescience and knowledge of the afterlife.⁷³

This myth shares the similar theme of King Söndök's quasi-divine insight and prophetic power. In contrast, however, it is structurally different from the aforementioned tales. There is no phenomenon to be observed or interpreted -- instead, King Söndök simply prophesies her time of death and burial site. Once again, the language of “awe” is used to describe how her subjects and courtier viewed her. Unsurprising considering the historical precedent of the potency of her prophecies, her burial site came to symbolize a Buddhist heaven. An argument could be made that this was a self-fulfilling prophecy; King Munmu could have been well aware of his predecessor's prophecy and sought to fulfill it. However, the point that Iryön desired to make through this myth is King Söndök's profound attunement with Buddhism—a factor of regnal legitimacy in both Silla and Koryö.

Kim Pusik, on the other hand, ends with the following commentary:

As I understand, in ancient times there was Lady Nuwa who assisted Fuxi in administering the nine districts, but she was not the son of heaven. Coming to Impress Lu and Wu Zhao, they assisted young and inexperienced rulers, and made decisions as if they were emperors. The histories did not officially label them as rulers but only called them “High Empress Dowager” Lady Lu and “Heavenly Empress Dowager” Lady Wu. According to the laws of heaven, yang is firm and yin is gentle and according to the laws of man, man is honorable and woman is demeaning. How can one permit an old woman to leave the woman's quarters and determine the governmental affairs of the state? Silla, helping a woman to rise to occupy the royal throne, is a product of an age of unrest. It is fortunate that the state did not collapse. There is a phrase in Shiji (Records of the Historians), “The hen does not announce the morning.” And in Yijing (The Book of Changes) there is the phrase, “An emaciated sow

still seeks to romp around.” How can this not be a warning?⁷⁴

Kim openly critiques the establishment of a woman as a ruler during the Silla dynasty. Though he does include historical precedent of woman leadership in earlier times and in China, he notes that these instances have been under unofficial statuses. However, in his depiction of King Söndök and her reign, he does acknowledge her military strategy as having been critical for the survival of the Silla dynasty.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Kim Pusik and Iryön paint a complex portrait of a female king who was known for her divine wisdom, military strategy, and general competence. What is more telling of these accounts of King Söndök however, is the complex relationship that these two men had with the concept of gender, especially in light of the loss of status and power of women at the time. The different political motivations of both authors in writing their histories were clearly displayed in Kim Pusik's attempt to attribution of King Söndök's feats to herself while also acknowledging Confucian ideology by including a critique of the establishment of a female ruler. Iryön's desire to promote Buddhism through the great rule of the divinely wise Buddhist Söndök was tempered by his views towards women who were viewed to be lower in status though still religiously relevant in later Koryö. Through this paper's search for King Söndök, we have highlighted the importance of conceptions of gender and power through the lens of time.

NOTES

1. The word “queen” in English can be used to describe many different positions: the wife of a king, the mother to a king, a regent for a minor, or a female ruler. Often, English has the property of causing confusion due to a lack of terms for specific conceptions. In the case of Sondok, her title of yeowang, female king, was lost in translation from classical Chinese to English. In Korean she was differentiated as yeowang, female king, rather than just wang, king, in order to create a distinction between her and a later male king by the same name.
2. It should be noted that she was the eldest daughter of King Jinpyeong, suggesting that succession was first determined by bloodline status, gender, and then age.

3. The Silla dynasty operated on a class system determined by bloodline, song-gol was the highest rank one could be born into and originally the only line eligible to take the throne.
4. Nelson, 77
5. Baekje (18 BCE-660 CE), Goguryeo (37 BC-668 BCE), and Silla (57 BCE-935 BCE)
6. Lee Bae-young, 137
7. Ibid, 139
8. Ibid, 139
9. Ibid, 140
10. Ibid, 139
11. Ibid, 140
12. Ibid, 140
13. Eckert, 28
14. Who was told to have had a dragon queen as a mother.
15. Who was allegedly born from a beautiful mystical egg.
16. Nelson, 83
17. Seth, 42
18. Nelson, 89
19. Peter H. Lee (1993), 62
20. Nelson, 89
21. Molony, Thiess, and Choi, 24
22. Ibid, 24
23. Ibid, 23
24. Nelson, 83
25. Ibid, 83
26. Ibid, 88
27. Ibid, 85
28. Ibid, 88
29. Ibid, 88
30. Ibid, 87
31. Eckert, 32
32. Ibid, 32
33. Ibid, 28
34. Peter H. Lee (1993), 63
35. Eckert, 34
36. Ibid, 35
37. Seth, 90
38. Ibid, 90
39. Yong-chung Kim, 47
40. Seth, 97
41. Yong-chung Kim, 21
42. Ibid, 47
43. Ibid, 79
44. Lee Bae-young, 151
45. Yong-chung Kim, 48
46. Lee Bae-young, 150
47. Ibid, 151
48. Seth, 93-94
49. Xu, 49
50. Seth, 94
51. Xu, 75
52. Ibid, 175
53. Ibid, 175
54. Ibid, 52
55. Ibid, 53
56. Ibid, 175
57. Nelson, 89
58. Kim Pusik, 147
59. Iryŏn , 73.

60. Ibid, 75
61. Ibid, 389
62. Kim Pusik, 147-148
63. Iryŏn, 73
64. Ibid, 74
65. Kim Pusik, 153
66. Ibid, 149-150
67. (when frogs are normally hibernating) Iryŏn, 74
68. Ibid, 73-74
69. "(and so is the similar to the name of the valley, which contained the expression Okmun, jade gate)" Iryŏn, 74
70. "(i.e. from Paekje)" Iryŏn, 74
71. "(lose its erection after orgasm)" Iryŏn, 74
72. Iryŏn, 74
73. Iryŏn, 74
74. Kim Pusik, 156-157

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India and China: Health Care, Female Empowerment and Capabilities Approach to Development

Manasi Joshi

ABSTRACT

The Capabilities Approach asserts that development without consideration for human rights is misguided and unsustainable, and that governments and development organizations must focus on expanding individual freedoms by meeting basic needs, or expanding capabilities. In other words, development itself can be understood as the expansion of freedoms, and freedom is the ultimate goal of development. This article compares India's and China's social policy approaches and their impact on development as a whole, specifically focusing on health care and women's empowerment as variables of interest. While India can learn many lessons in social policy from pre-reform China, the importance of expanding women's access to democracy and strengthening democracy overall cannot be underestimated. Though there are segments of the Indian populace that believe successful development necessitates wholesale adoption of China's policies, India must endeavor toward strengthening democracy through greater involvement of women in the political process, rather than mimicking China by cutting back the democratic process as a whole.

THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH

The Capabilities Approach asserts that development without consideration for human rights is misguided and unsustainable, and that governments and development organizations must focus on expanding individual freedoms by meeting basic needs or expanding capabilities. The most prominent spokesperson for this approach is its creator, Amartya Sen, an Indian economist-philosopher who elaborates on the Capabilities Approach thesis in *Development as Freedom*. In his book, Sen contends that expansion of individual freedoms composes both the means and the ends to development. In other words, development itself can be understood as the expansion of freedoms, and freedom is the ultimate goal of development.

Citizens with individual freedoms are equipped to grow the economy while citizens who lack basic capabilities cannot. Sen places the responsibility for expanding capabilities with the state:

A human rights approach brings to development the notion that people are entitled to have their

basic needs met, and that those in power have a duty and a moral obligation to facilitate this process. By attributing culpability to those who fail to duly deliver these benefits, a rights-based approach thus introduces an element of accountability that can be a powerful tool...reducing poverty and inequality, providing basic services, combating exclusion and strengthening people's livelihoods can only be achieved within a political environment that simultaneously seeks to address the issue of human rights for all citizens.¹

It follows that many of these basic capabilities stem from proper health; access to health care affects an individual's ability to participate in the economy and democracy. A family possessing the agency, productivity, and dignity that health facilitates will be more likely to spend money on children's education, a vital investment for a developing economy.²

Amartya Sen's ideas have "significantly influenced feminist development economics."³ Development initiatives have excluded women in the past, as they often neglect women's potential for participation in the labor force and the political process. However, Sen's ideas can

be used to specifically evaluate development initiatives on the basis of their ability to expand women's capabilities. The Capabilities Approach thesis can make program evaluation much simpler. One simply has to ask, does this expand the capabilities of women or not? This essay will compare India's and China's social policy approaches and their impact on development as a whole, specifically focusing on health care and women's empowerment as variables of interest. While some argue that female empowerment is achieved via access to family planning services, the intention of family planning programs in India and China has historically not focused on the expansion of female capabilities. The importance of intention in the Capabilities Approach toward development for women will also be explored.

THE UTILITY OF THE INDIA-CHINA COMPARISON

When considering the development process of India and weighing potential development solutions for India's future, the trajectory of China's growth since the 1950s is a natural source of inspiration and caution. In *India: Development and Participation*, economists Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen discuss the importance of the Chinese growth narrative in informing Indian development. They claim that "it is natural to judge Indian successes and failures in comparative terms with China."⁴ Dreze and Sen argue that this comparative tendency manifests itself in the formation of Maoist political parties in India that seek to replicate China's "successful liberalization programs and massive entry into international trade." This urge to take cues from China stems from the fact that only 60 years ago China and India began their development initiatives under relatively similar circumstances, but have since diverged in nearly every metric of development. To understand China's successes and failures is to gain relevant knowledge applicable to Indian development initiatives.

PRE-REFORM AND POST-REFORM CHINA

China's "take off" occurred in two stages, the first of which occurred from 1978 to 1993.⁵ The initial reform was

incrementally carried out by increasing the scope of the markets and utilizing government control of the market as a transitional institution. Though economists agree that "government ownership and control of firms does not have obvious advantage over private ownership," and that there are disadvantages to this system, during development there may be exceptions.⁶ In early stages of economic development government control can be seen as a second-best response, and economic arguments for delaying the privatization of existing state firms point to the gaps in the social safety net, the lack of a legal framework for corporate governance, and the lack of regulatory institutions.⁷ After this phase of development, China's government loosened the control of firms and allowed the progression of the market economy. The crucial difference between India and China that laid the groundwork for this transition was the social policy from the pre-reform period.

Dreze and Sen explore China before and after the economic reforms of 1979 because the pre-reform "accomplishments relating to education, health care, land reforms and social change" set the stage for China's takeoff in the post-reform period.⁸ In 1949, China's condition (in terms of poverty, illiteracy, and undernutrition) was comparable to India's. Since then, China's population has achieved higher literacy rates and improved health care due to a combination of beneficial social policy from the pre-reform period and the unprecedented growth rate of the post-reform period. India has not been as successful in developing these areas, and can find inspiration in certain aspects of China's pre-reform social policy.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA AND INDIA

Accomplishments in public health are an important component of pre-reform China's success, and are impressive considering the low economic growth of the period. Dreze and Sen claim that "China's real achievement... lies in what it managed to do despite poor economic growth."⁹ Sen's capability approach explains the significance of health in development, of which China's success is an excellent example. Individual capabilities are expanded by public

health protections, and development can be understood as the expansion of these individual capabilities. An important indicator of public health infrastructure effectiveness is the under-5 mortality rate. China has progressed in this metric due to its combination of policy and rapid economic growth: “The reduction of under-5 mortality rates in China at the country, provincial, and county level is an extraordinary success story. Reductions of under-5 mortality rates faster than 8.8% (twice MDG 4 pace) are possible. Extremely rapid declines seem to be related to public policy in addition to socioeconomic progress.”¹⁰

Public health campaigns in pre-reform China were effective and thorough, specifically in the realm of preventative measures. The Chinese bureaucracy was comprised of an expansive network of health workers charged with the maintenance, improvement, and expansion of medical infrastructure in rural areas. Public health infrastructure was particularly effective in the realm of preventative and vector-borne diseases. Local doctors were directly involved with what Dreze and Sen describe as “social mobilization for public health,” which was comprised of directing and organizing the locale with urgency and precision.¹¹ By tackling preventative disease all over China and targeting vector-borne diseases aggressively, and by employing a network of public health officials, China achieved success in overall health care. The rural population of China benefitted from public health infrastructure in ways their Indian counterparts did not.

After reform, however, public health took a backseat to economic growth. The post-reform period is thus a less desirable model for India’s development. While the burst of economic growth did help with the continued success of health programs, growth was primarily concentrated in urban areas, and the special focus given to rural China ceased in the post-reform period:

A decentralized and fragmented health system, such as the one found in China, is not well-suited to making a rapid and coordinated response to public health emergencies...For the past 25 years, the Chinese Government has kept economic development at the top of the policy agenda at the expense of public health,

especially in terms of access to health care for the 800 million people living in rural areas.¹²

For this reason, in the case of India, it is best to seek inspiration in China’s pre-reform policy and recognize the limits of the post-reform period. Considering that China’s post-reform growth has not been enough to sustain the admirable public health infrastructure of the pre-reform period, India’s economic growth, which is much less than China’s, is unlikely to carry the health of the citizens. Public and community health in India must be addressed through policy measures—pre-reform China proved that health reform can be successful in the absence of growth and an falter in the presence of rapid growth.

While existing Indian public health infrastructure is notoriously corrupt and criticism of the Indian bureaucracy is fair, it is unfortunate that negativity towards Indian public health infrastructure dominates public opinion. Preventative measures, such as the targeting of disease vectors, were an efficient use of China’s resources and could potentially make a large impact on India considering vector-transmitted diseases are observed in India and only 0.8% of the Indian GDP goes towards health expenditures.¹³ This is remarkably little relative to the health expenditures of other countries; it follows that the public health infrastructure is weak and limited. Frustration with the Indian public health bureaucracy is understandable but unhelpful -- if anything, there is an argument to expand public health infrastructure. The dismal state of public health services has increased the burden of Indian primary care providers because it allows the spread of infectious disease. While some physicians are particularly driven and have made an effort to work on public health issues, private practitioners simply do not have the time or resources to effectively work on public health initiatives. The Chinese model of pre-reform public health was carried out by an expansive bureaucracy and was effective in that it did not burden individual, specialized physicians with largely structural public health issues.

In health economies that depend on private care providers, information asymmetries between providers and patients hinder efficient competition. Normally,

competing private entities push one another to provide the best product, but in this case, consumers (patients) may or may not be aware of the quality of care they are receiving. While other countries implement regulatory bodies to manage the lack of efficient competition caused by information asymmetries, in India, these bodies are rife with corruption. Thus, the health care system is divided among highly specialized, technologically advanced care for the elite, and an unregulated informal sector for others. Greater equity can be achieved through a system like that of pre-reform China, one which includes widespread access to basic preventative measures for all. This system reduces pressure on private practitioners, and boosts the quality of care for low-income citizens who suffer disproportionately from preventable disease without access to private practice physicians.

This said, there have been significant successes in specific Indian public health campaigns which concentrate government efforts on a single goal. The Universal Immunization Program was launched in 1985 “with the objective of immunising 85 per cent of newborns and 100 per cent of expectant mothers by 1990” and protecting Indians from the most prevalent preventable infectious diseases in India.¹⁴ The program was motivated by social development goals, and the belief that improving quality of life will by extension encourage growth in social and economic development sectors, which will in turn perpetuate further health care industry improvements. The program was able to surpass its initial goal of 85 per cent (the minimum required for herd immunity protection) and reach nearly 100 per cent immunization rates in all states for all vaccines with the exception of measles.¹⁵

The Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) in India has made an effort to make at least one vital service to the mother and child accessible and affordable. Universalisation of immunisation is the first step towards health for all. Unlike small-pox [sic], which was eradicated once for all, immunisation is a continuous and ongoing process. Anyone concerned with public health must now think of the various issues of the sustainability of UIP.¹⁶

Effective infrastructure was created to accomplish this feat, though there are concerns about sustainability; the initiative was well-planned at the central level but district immunization officers were unable to draw sufficient funds for longer-term protection.

The Universal Salt Iodization initiative also took a similar form. Iodization of salt is a vital component of preventative health care, and prevents neonatal hypothyroidism, poor mental health, and poor physical development.¹⁷ In Uttar Pradesh, a state that does not manufacture salt, implementation consisted of three phases spanning four years that combined work with salt manufacturers, salt wholesalers, media organizations, and children’s schools. An evaluation of the implementation found that “institutionalizing regular salt testing through the school network could be used as an effective method for rapid assessment of the salt situation in a geographical area and as a proxy for assessing progress towards reaching the USI goal.”¹⁸

These instances show a capacity for social mobilization for health care campaigns, but also highlight a lack of sustainable and comprehensive public health initiatives. Though some states have demonstrated progress, there has not been a widespread, unified improvement in Indian public health, and the fact remains that a minuscule portion of the GDP is spent on public health. The unity and functionality of pre-reform China’s public health network is a necessary source of inspiration for India. China’s post-reform growth is the result of momentum set by pre-reform policy. To rely on economic growth to improve citizen capabilities and to assume that good health will follow the lead of economic growth is to disregard one of the most important components of Chinese development.

MALTHUSIAN FEAR AND WOMEN’S AGENCY NEEDS

A striking example of capabilities expansion through public health campaigns is the expansion of capabilities for women through access to family planning resources. While access to these resources is an important component of women’s empowerment in developing areas, they must

be implemented in a manner that considers agency needs of women.

Modern gender and development approaches utilize the capabilities approach, and take into account both physical needs and “agency needs.”¹⁹ Amartya Sen dedicates a chapter of *Development as Freedom* to the topic of women’s agency and social change. Women’s agency includes several factors including, but not limited to, earning power, economic role outside the family, literacy, and property rights.²⁰ Sen explains that “the concentration [in the past] was mainly on women’s wellbeing—and it was a much needed corrective. The objectives have now, however, gradually evolved and broadened from this ‘welfarist’ focus to incorporate and emphasize the active role of women’s agency.” He maintains that an “agent’ is fundamentally distinct from (though not independent of) a patient.”²¹ According to Sen, experiencing wellbeing is only one dimension of personhood—acknowledging agency is the other. Furthermore, focusing on agency may “remove the inequities that depress the wellbeing.”²²

By this logic, simply providing access to family planning resources or creating policy that encourages a low fertility rate is not sufficient for promoting women’s agency. While access to family planning provides resources that may empower women, it fails to comprehensively improve women’s empowerment because its emphasis is not directed towards actively improving women’s agency. In the case of China and India, the focus of family planning programs is on curbing population growth, not on the improvement of women’s agency.

Family planning is an area of interest in both China and India, and the policies that relate to family planning in these nations are driven by a fear of rapid population growth, not by a desire to work towards women’s empowerment. During development, populations tend to grow as birth rates remain high and death rates decrease because of medical advancements, sanitation, and economic growth.²³ Fertility rates stay constant, in a phenomena known as birth rate inertia, caused by the large proportion of young people; even if some have few children, there are sufficient couples that the birth rate remains high. In addition, “societal norms

regarding children and other socioeconomic factors” play an important role in birth rate inertia.²⁵ Malthusian fears drive government interests in fertility, and these interests have significant impacts on the freedoms of women.

China responded to this birth rate inertia with its famous One Child Policy. By incentivizing parents to have just one child, China’s government indirectly created an aggregate disadvantage for young girls. In any environment with failing markets of insurance (social security or pension), parents must have children until the marginal benefit of having an additional child equals the marginal cost, and the utility of children is old-age support.²⁵ Furthermore, if it is a cultural view that only sons will be responsible for old-age support, this ideal number of children for old-age support doubles. The policy “jeopardizes old-age security” and may result in discrimination against daughters in the form of sex-selective abortion or female infanticide.²⁶ In the instance that mothers are pressured to have just one child, they are more likely to adhere to the rule if they have a son first than if they first have a daughter. In the case that most daughters are born to multiple-child families, and sons are more likely to be only children, sons will systematically benefit from the only child incentives more frequently than daughters.²⁷ This will result in a long-term gender disparity, emerging from disparate access to financial support, quality education, and even parental attention.

There are arguments that the One Child Policy actually benefits women: it decreases the burden of childrearing and may even encourage female participation in the workforce. The One Child Policy may have “indirect benefits for some Chinese women” but it is vital to note that it “is not explicitly designed for the benefit of women.”²⁸ Even if it contains indirect benefits for women, it is fundamentally “in conflict with the right of women to make decisions concerning their own reproductive choices” when “women should be able to attain full equality without first being required to undergo the supreme sacrifice.”²⁹ Sen and Dreze describe this sacrifice as a loss of freedom, as a “social loss in itself,” and maintain that the same end result can be achieved through other means, means that expand freedom through education and opportunity rather than reducing

freedom through coercion.³⁰ For example, the Indian state of Kerala has achieved a fertility rate of 1.8 (lower than China's) without state coercion. This progress is attributed to the education of women and the involvement of women in gainful employment.³¹

In India, public health campaigns have emphasized the importance of contraception out of Malthusian fear. In fact, "after the World War II era, Western experts...warned [of] population explosion and its terrifying consequences: famines, riots, political instability, expansion of Communism, wars. A heterogeneous coalition of demographers, public health experts, and politicians was urgently looking for an effective means to curb population growth."³² Even decades before, "concerns about population growth in India began to be expressed late in the nineteenth century, ironically when there was little or no data to establish the fact of population growth."³³ The very first Indian Five Year Plan (1950-1955) included slowing the birth rate among the country's most urgent tasks.³⁴ Access to family planning resources was lauded as a solution to the population problem. However, the women's right to family planning in India did not result from protracted protests of feminists as it did in the West. It was a recommendation of the government, a recommendation that was not seeking to expand the rights of women.³⁵ While explicitly, justifications included women's health and wellbeing, politicians were focusing on women's roles as mothers, and the ways in which women can impact economic and population growth—family planning was about reproduction, not about the expansion of liberties for women.³⁶

Clearly, nonetheless, access to family planning expands some capabilities of women in developing nations. Following Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, which asserts that provision of capabilities is an important means to development, it could be that, regardless of its intention to control women, family planning access in India is beneficial to women. After India's first implementation of population policy, access to family planning measures improved women's health and wellbeing by allowing them to limit the number of children they have, and decreased the financial and bodily strain associated with multiple

unplanned births.³⁷ However, in practice, social pressures led women to only use contraceptives after already having children.³⁸ This expanded capabilities by allowing women to improve their health status, but if the main utilizers of family planning resources were mothers who had already fulfilled social norms of childbearing, then benefits of contraception for single women were not fully observed. These benefits would include improved access to higher education and greater opportunity for gainful employment which works slowly to develop women's participation in the economy.

The *Family Planning Practices in India Third All India Survey* provides insight into the norms of family planning in the year 1990, almost 50 years after the original push for contraception and population control. The survey, sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, investigated differences in family planning practices by geography, gender, educational level, and several other parameters. The found that 30 years remained the median age at which women begin using family planning services. When compared with the average age of marriage, the survey claims that it seems women begin using family planning techniques only after achieving a desired family size.³⁹ Further corroboration of this conclusion comes from the data that reflects that 70 percent of total family planning patients choose sterilization.⁴⁰ Access to family planning methods has enabled couples to stop having children, allowing for more manageable family financial decisions and for women to better manage their own bodies.

It does not appear that women are empowered in these decision-making processes merely because family planning services are available. The educational status of wives is positively correlated with the age of marriage, the number of children desired, and the general awareness of family planning techniques.⁴¹ Furthermore, in rural settings, large proportions of men "reported that they had 'never' discussed [family planning issues] with their wives" and it was shown that awareness of female sterilization methods was far greater than that of male sterilization methods.⁴² Family planning has improved the capabilities of women in some ways, but not in the most efficient way, and has

not affected the lives of women from rural backgrounds or women who have not completed their education. The report concludes that “existing methods of canvassing... need to be reviewed.”⁴³

CONCLUSIONS

While India has had less success than China in expanding education access to women, there have been some strides in the realm of women’s education and democratic participation. Education for women has increased and improved over the last three generations, but education has not translated directly to political participation. While there are greater numbers of women voters, “it does not indicate that political consciousness and level of participation in women in political affairs have been as expected... Politics has remained outside the domain of women. Raising a handful of them to the topmost level in the Parliament, Cabinet or administrative jobs cannot be accepted as the index of general level of consciousness...”⁴⁴

While India is able to learn many lessons in social policy from pre-reform China, the importance of expanding women’s access to democracy and overall strengthening of democracy cannot be underestimated. Dreze and Sen explain that “no substantial famine has ever occurred in a democratic country where the government tolerates opposition, accepts the electoral process, and can be publicly criticized.”⁴⁵ A nation is protected by those that hold the government accountable—voters, vocal protestors, and a well-supported press. The greatest “non-lesson” from China is observed in a comparison of China’s poor record with famine and India’s performance in famine prevention since independence in 1947.⁴⁶ Dreze and Sen place responsibility for famine on China’s failing incentive system in agriculture and poor distribution policies. While these were certainly the root cause of famine, the inability of the poor to respond or protest, and the Chinese government’s immunity to public pressure ensured that the policies could not be adjusted until the famine was well underway. In fact, by the time the famine was registered in government offices, it had been going on for three years.⁴⁷ Though there are segments of the Indian populace that

believe successful development necessitates the adoption of all of China’s policies, India must endeavor towards strengthening democracy through greater involvement of women in the political process, rather than aiming to cut back the democratic process as a whole, mimicking China.

Using the capabilities approach to examine the successes and failures of China and India allows for future recommendations and prioritizations in future development proposals in Asia.

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Chinese Environmental NGOs and their Escape from Corporatism

Taylor Morin

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the regulatory context within which Chinese environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) operate, eventually making the argument that Chinese ENGOs face a corporatist regulatory scheme that puts an emphasis on forced representational monopolies and strict registration requirements. Despite these constraints, Chinese ENGOs operate successfully and with some freedom because of three factors: self-regulation, international pressure on the state, and strong state and media relationships. This article investigates these factors and explores how they make a concrete impact in the realm of environmental protection in China.

INTRODUCTION

On April 28, 2016, the front page of the New York Times' website ran the headline "China Restricts Foreign Groups in Move to Curb Western Ideas." The accompanying article detailed the passage of the 2016 Foreign NGO law, legislation that requires foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to register with the state police and obtain state sponsorship from a Chinese government agency.¹ The Times framed the 2016 NGO Law's passage as a crackdown on civil society groups, and a consolidation of power on behalf of the Chinese state. This characterization of the law is not inaccurate - however, the 2016 NGO law can also be understood as an extension of the pre-existing state-society relationship that developed following the Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989. In particular, domestic environmental NGOs ("ENGOs"), have long been regulated under a corporatist-style structure that creates a unique relationship between these organizations, the state, and the Chinese population. Faced with these regulations, Chinese ENGOs use a unique mix of internal and external human capital to achieve their desired political or environmental goals. While Chinese state policy is designed to control ENGOs through corporatist measures, many of these ENGOs operate with a significant amount of freedom because of a combination of self-regulation, international pressure on the state, and strong state and media relationships.

This paper illuminates how, despite nearly three decades of close supervision and regulation, Chinese ENGOs have pursued their political and environmental goals with remarkable success. First, the paper will introduce the basic structure of Chinese environmental governance, in order to explain why China's regulation limiting the efficacy of domestic ENGOs should be designated as corporatist. Next, the investigation will address three reasons why, despite these restrictions, Chinese ENGOs have been mostly able to thrive and achieve their goals. Finally, I will consider the impacts that relative ENGO freedom has had on China both domestically and internationally.

BACKGROUND: CHINESE ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

To understand the structure of regulations that Chinese ENGOs face, it is first important to understand the governmental setting in which ENGOs operate. China's environmental governance is fractured and messy because of competing interests, especially at the local level. At the top of China's environmental hierarchy is the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), formerly known as SEPA before its promotion to a cabinet level ministry in 2008. The MEP is charged with implementing Chinese environmental policy and regulating polluters while reporting directly to the State Council which controls its

funding.² In actuality, due to resource constraints, the MEP has very little influence. With a staff size of roughly 300 people, the MEP's staff is less than 2% of that employed by the United States' Environmental Protection Agency.³ Severe understaffing makes the MEP a very small factor in the environmental regulation of China, a geographically massive polity ruled by an equally vast bureaucracy. Further, the power the MEP does have, that to approve environmental impact assessments for projects, has been misused. The ministry has granted approval to multiple dangerous chemical and steel plants near Beijing, Hebei, and Tianjin. The pollution caused by these plants was estimated to have caused almost 10,000 premature deaths in 2011 alone.⁴

Since the MEP has largely failed as the leading environmental protection agency in China, responsibility falls to local micro-level replicates of the MEP: Environmental Protection Bureaus (ERBs). ERBs not only enforce mandates from the MEP, but also draft and implement regulations that cater to their respective jurisdictions. Technically the responsibility of each ERB is to the ministry directly above it. In reality, however, ERBs face political pressure from all directions. Not only must the ERB respond to the desires of the MEP, but it also must coordinate with other governmental bodies in the same geographical jurisdiction (such as construction agencies). This 'horizontal' pressure often conflicts with vertical pressure from the MEP. Furthermore, county-level ERBs face pressure from the county government. These governments determine funding for the ERBs and influence the appointment of staff to the bureaus. This authority makes ERBs beholden to local governments and prevents them serving as a check on local officials who might make environmentally harmful decisions.⁵

China's environmental policy structure of having local officials make environmental decisions is harmful because of the commonly held local perception that there is an inherent tradeoff between environmental protection and economic development. Faced with a perceived decision between growth and sustainability, authorities often choose to side with economic development; evaluation criteria for

local officials include regional economic growth rates, but not environmental standards.⁶ While MEP tried to change evaluation criteria to include environmental standards, the effort failed because of opposition from local officials themselves.⁷ Further, many in local governments are influenced by the theory of the "environmental Kuznets Curve," which argues that economic growth is damaging to the environment until a certain income level is reached, after which economic growth improves the environment. This mindset encourages local officials to further ignore environmental damages and solely focus on economic growth, even when both approaches are viable. Unless the entire party leadership gets behind changing the way that local performance is evaluated, the MEP "is likely to remain an island of environmental awareness in a sea of disregard".⁸

This 'disregard' opens up opportunity for civil society action in the form of ENGOS. Due to explosive growth in the civil society field during the late 1990s and early 2000s, there are now more than 180,000 registered NGOs in China, 5,300 of which are environmental NGOs.⁹ These ENGOS engage in a variety of activities that fill the role of what they believe local governments should be doing to protect the environment. China, especially wary of social movements after the Tiananmen Square protests, created a special body of law to regulate NGOs in 1998. These regulations follow a specific socio-political framework which I will analyze next.

CORPORATIST DESIGN OF NGO REGULATIONS IN CHINA

In 1998, China passed the 'Regulation on Registration and Supervision of Social Organizations' (RRSSO) (社会团体登记管理条例). This section will outline one of the main strategies that the law uses to control social organizations and NGOs: control over registration process and procedure. Additionally, this section will explain how registration control defines Chinese NGO regulation as a corporatist structure.

One of the main ways that China has created control over NGOs is through the RRSSO's lengthy registration

process. The RRSSO lays out six steps for registration, three of which must occur before the actual application process even begins. The first measure in the process requires approval from a supervisory organization. This step is essential because it is both the prerequisite for planning an NGO and because the supervisory organization serves as one of the overseers of the NGO throughout its lifetime.¹⁰ These supervisory organizations are groups that are either part of the government or have a very close association with the Chinese Communist Party. Supervisory organizations for ENGOs have included the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Construction, and on a local scale the Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau.¹¹ The sponsorship requirement is designed to be a way for the government to control NGOs. One of the only reasons a supervisory organization would decide to sponsor an NGO and accept the extra administrative burden required would be if that NGO provided a benefit for the supervisory organization. Since these supervisory organizations are by nature government organs, this selection mechanism ensures that NGOs work in some way to benefit the government.

The second way China designed its registration process to control NGOs was by ensuring a monopoly of representation. The RRSSO states that an NGO can not be registered if “there already exists a social organization in the same administrative district with the same or a similar scope of activity, and there is thus no need to set up another one.” Further, the RRSSO strictly limits the geographic boundaries of an NGO’s operating area and prevents NGOs from setting up regional chapters outside the geographic scope of their jurisdictions. For example, a national NGO can conduct operations anywhere, but it cannot organize itself into local chapters. On the other hand, a local ENGO in Beijing cannot conduct activities outside of Beijing.¹² Combined, these regulations grant an effective monopoly to an ENGO operating in a given region.

This forced monopoly of civil representation is a key feature of corporatism as a framework for perceiving state-society relations. Philippe Schmitter defines corporatism as

... a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.¹³

China’s mode of NGO governance is congruent with Schmitter’s definition of corporatism.. The laws barring multiple NGOs from co-existing in a single region satisfy the requirement for “compulsory, non-competitive... categories” of organizations and the control designed by China through supervisory organizations completes the ‘exchange’ of corporatism as a state-society relationship.

Hsu and Hasmath argue that China has instituted a direct corporatist structure because it desires a “substitute control mechanism for the state.” China, they argue, designed the RRSSO to let the country choose the NGOs it desires, legally authorize those NGOs to complete the tasks China wants completed, and force rules and regulations on the NGOs. This delegation of power and control is most obviously seen in government-organized NGOs (GONGOs). GONGOs, such as the Communist Youth League, are NGOs only in name, and mainly serve as proxies for the government. With the explosion in NGOs and the passage of the RRSSO, this corporatist delegation now extends to ‘regular’ NGOs who also must work in conjunction with the government.¹⁴

Not only do state desires foster a corporatist NGO environment, but competition between local states in China create the need to ‘export’ to NGOs. Andrew Walder visualizes China’s local states as private firms that are driven by their own interests.¹⁵ If local governments and their officials are judged solely based on economic performance, it seems to be a waste of resources to devote large amounts of time or money to protecting the environment. Instead, the local governments can outsource these functions to NGOs who have the permission of the government to work on social or environmental issues with their own

resources, while still remaining under government control. Though this is a broad generalization that does not apply to every municipality (for example, ENGOs and authorities in Shanghai work closely together)¹⁶, most local states have an interest in preserving this corporatist structure.

What are the impacts of this corporatist, civil-monopoly structure? First, it prevents both competition and collaboration between NGOs, both of which would have positive impacts. Competition between NGOs is often over grant money from donors, and the “supply” of donations often increases when multiple NGOs compete for it.¹⁷ Collaboration between NGOs is also important, especially for Chinese ENGOs who often conduct activities to stop location-based construction projects like major dams. The specific jurisdiction of these projects call for action by local ENGOs, yet as previously mentioned, the corporatist design of the RRSSO allows for only one ENGO per jurisdiction, preventing local collaboration. One might assume that the strict regulations of NGOs (including ENGOs) might hamstring their ability to achieve their goals. However, Chinese ENGOs have overcome these regulations for reasons that will be outlined in the following sections.

SELF-REGULATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS

The monitoring of ENGOs allowed by the RRSSO (activities and funding are consistently examined by the supervising organization to ensure compliance) has resulted in ENGOs selectively choosing the activities they pursue. While some ENGOs have officially violated the law with their actions, many NGO leaders self-censor their organization to ensure it does not cross a line that will cause the government to act. Interviews of NGO directors have found that while supervisory organizations are supposed to be consistently watching NGOs, they typically only intervene when an NGO seems troublesome or makes political or financial mistakes.¹⁸

In order to achieve environmental protection without upsetting their supervisory organizations or the government as a whole, ENGOs aim to promote environmental

awareness and action among citizens who have historically viewed environmental damage as a problem to be solved only by the government. As a result, ENGOs adopt approaches such as public lectures, workshops, conferences, salon discussions, field trips, publication of documents and online activism through message boards and social media¹⁹. These are all forms of activism that do an effective job of informing the public about environmental issues while raising no concerns within the Chinese Party-State.

Beyond public awareness spreading, ENGOs also participate in activities that appear at once both “revolutionary” and non-provocative. These can be actions such as political lobbying, creating unofficial alliances based on founders’ connections (explored in the next section), and legal action against harmful companies (also explored later).²⁰ These approaches are not within the typical constraints of a corporatist structure, since they reach into the political and legal sphere they are supposed to be insulated from. However, none of these actions are inherently controversial enough to cause government backlash, so ENGOs engage in them nonetheless.

ENGOs can still avoid confrontation and enter the political sphere by resorting to actions that are “near the boundary between official, prescribed politics and politics by other means”²¹. These actions step into a political ‘gray zone’ more common in the western world, where NGOs use the official phrasing of the political elite against them to curb their own power and policies.

Finally, ENGOs engage in significant administrative risk management. Ru cites an ENGO that outsourced their organization’s accounting to the Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau, thus protecting the NGO from any skepticism that might be caused by hiring an outside consultant. While not every ENGO takes those extensive steps, most do receive financial advice from their supervisory organizations.²²

In summary, while supervisory organizations are legally ‘watchdogs’ of NGOs, ENGOs have employed self-restraint and regulation in a way that lets the government act in more of a reactive regulatory role. This, in turn, lets ENGO undertake their advocacy

activities with a sense of freedom that isn't inherent in a corporatist structure.

GUANXI OF ENVIRONMENTAL NGO FOUNDERS

Another reason for the success of ENGOs in overcoming corporatist NGO regulations is the elite interconnectedness of their founders. Having connections both amongst founders and between founders and the rest of elite Chinese society allows ENGOs to utilize top human capital to achieve their goals. Ru and Ortolano²³ collected detailed data on 67 of China's ENGOs and their leaders and used that data to draw conclusions about their founders.

One of the main findings of the survey was the conclusion that ENGO founders had strong guanxi amongst one another. Many ENGO founders are part of China's educational elite. Eight-five percent of the founders in Ru and Orlando's study had at least one degree from a college or university. This is far higher than the 5.4% of the general Chinese population who had college degrees when the study was conducted in 2004. After college, 73% of the future founders entered the professional world as business people, professors, government officials, journalists or other white collar professions. Even of those who did not enter the professional world, many were either previously famous environmental activists or educators.²⁴

Guanxi connections can significantly help ENGOs overcome corporatist regulation. ENGO founders can use their networks in the government to help with registration through the Ministry of Civil Affairs. As noted earlier, before even beginning the process of registering as an NGO, organizations must find a supervisory government organization or agency to sponsor them during registration. This can be difficult because government organizations usually see too much risk and too little reward in sponsoring an NGO. This assumption can change, however, if the founder of an NGO is considered an 'elite' or has guanxi with someone in the sponsoring organization. As an example, one ENGO founder who was a well-known environmental economist used his connections inside the

Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau to gain the sponsorship of the Bureau. This example clearly shows how connections and guanxi can be used to overcome one of the most restrictive elements of Chinese NGO regulation: the registration process.²⁵

Not only do ENGO founders have guanxi with those in supervisory organizations, but also with other ENGO leaders. There were 31 significant connections between the 67 ENGOs studied by Ru and Orlando. Specifically, five main ENGOs have disproportionately influenced environmental activism in China: China Small Animal Protection Association (CSAPA), Friends of Nature (FON), Green Earth Volunteers (GEV), Green Camp and Green Forum. These five organizations had either a direct or indirect influence on the formation of almost 31 ENGOs.²⁶

The connections that ENGO founders wield make a difference in achieving an ENGO's goals. The result of a proposal to build 13 dams on the Nu river is an amazing case study of the impact of guanxi connection on ENGO efficacy. The Nu river is prized by environmentalists, as it flows down from the Tibetan plateau towards Myanmar and is one of the longest undammed rivers in China.²⁷ The founder of one China's bigger ENGOs, Green Earth Volunteers, had a close relationship with a staff member of what is now the Ministry of Environmental Protection. The staff member, sensing political weakness in the project, encouraged the founder to mobilize other ENGOs against the project. This led Friends of Nature, the biggest ENGO in China, to use its access to political institutions to bring an environmentally-friendly perspective to the policy debates occurring inside the government. This influence of the decision making process led then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to scrap the Nu River dam project in 2004.²⁸

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGOS AND THE CHINESE MEDIA

The Chinese media is one of the most important external tools of Chinese ENGOs. Before understanding the interaction between the two, it is first important to understand the background of the Chinese media as it

relates to the environment. News media in China has a massive influence; newspaper circulation is over 20 billion copies per year, and state-run Chinese Central Television (CCTV) reaches nearly 95% of the population.²⁹ Environmental reporting in China started with coverage of international events. This coverage followed worldwide demonstrations, like the Greenpeace demonstrations in the 1980's. The point of this coverage was not to educate the Chinese public about environmental issues, but instead to show that there was major opposition to the outcomes of the western economic and government policies.

This policy of allowing environmental news ended after multiple environmentally-focused protests occurred in Tiananmen Square in 1995 and 1996. After these protests Chinese authorities realized that through the media's coverage of international environmental activism, the public was learning how to execute western-style advocacy and dissent; as a result coverage of international environmental issues was banned.³⁰

However, once exposure to international environmental news was banned, the state media began to publish content positively portraying environmental events such as Earth day or World Water Day. The intention of this coverage was to raise general environmental awareness and to encourage environmental action and involvement.³¹

While there is no independent media in China, there are several newspapers and columns that exist solely to report on environmental issues. For example, the first national newspaper to specialize in environmental issues was *China Environment News (CEN)*. The main contribution of CEN is its weekend edition entitled "The Weekly." The front page of The Weekly usually publishes at least one in-depth story per week, and these stories are often critical of the Party-State. The example of CEN and its "The Weekly" column shows how the Chinese government has opened up to allowing some criticism of its policies, and opportunities for ENGOs to expand their projects.

Just as ENGO founders have a strong connection both between themselves and the government, there is a strong two-way connection between environmental movements and the media. Many of the 400 members of Friends of

Nature are journalists or reporters, and many reporters are dedicated environmentalists.³² This connection is critical to overcoming the corporatist structure created by the RRSSO regulations that explicitly try to limit the geographic reach of NGOs. Even if an NGO can not operate officially in an area, it can use the media to spread its message.

Global Village Environmental Culture Institute is an example of an NGO that uses the media to its advantage. While the Institute is first and foremost an environmental NGO, it also serves as a media group that produces programs aired on CCTV and writes articles published in state newspapers. Many of these pieces are not necessarily groundbreaking, but simply informative pieces (for example, about how and where to dispose of batteries) that have a large impact given the reach of CCTV.

Finally, media also had an outsized impact on the Nu River campaign considered in the previous section. Green Earth Volunteers brought together a network of NGOs and instructed them to reach out to the media members in their ranks. Further, the founder of Green Earth Volunteers was a nationally renowned radio journalist who himself had many connections in the media industry. The result was a surprising national media message with over 180 domestic media outlets covering the successful Nu River campaign.³³

Given the rapid spread of technology, media influence and access is more important than ever. Thanks to their *guanxi* and connections within the media industry, Chinese ENGOs are well equipped to use the state's own news source as a way to overcome China's constricting, corporatist NGO regulations.

CURRENT BENEFITS OF OVERCOMING CORPORATISM

Many of the benefits that have come from ENGO's deployment of self-regulation, *guanxi* connections and the Chinese media to overcome corporatist regulations are only now coming to light. Chinese ENGOs are stepping outside the norms one would expect them to follow if they were simply adhering to a corporatist structure. These changes in activity are affecting a wide range of people, from individuals who have been wronged by

environmental damages to the global population affected by climate change.

One of the most important recent positive changes for ENGOs has been the revision of China's Environmental Protection Law. At the beginning of 2015, the law was amended to allow qualified NGOs to be litigants in legal suits that dealt with environmental issues. The first successful lawsuit under the amended legislation was won by Friends of Nature and Green Home of Fujian, who sued four men for damaging forestry land. The policy change represents a positive broader shift away from punitive government environmental enforcement and towards legal action that can be settled in courts.³⁴

Finally, Chinese ENGOs are following the lead of many environmentalists and are beginning to focus on climate change as the key environmental issue faced by humankind. Chinese ENGOs were invited to COP21, the Paris Climate Talks, to speak on climate change issues. Many of these ENGOs provided valuable research and policy guidance to Chinese negotiators as they worked out a deal. The corporatist structure of NGO regulations would make this seem impossible as NGOs would be limited to their specific geographic areas. Yet through self-regulation, these ENGOs were able to gain trust with Chinese authorities and make their voices heard in Paris.³⁵

CONCLUSION

Given the sheer size of China's rapidly growing economy, the country is destined to have a large environmental impact. The government, especially at the local level, too often privileges concerns regarding economic growth over environmental protection. This is where civil society can enter the fray. By connecting the government to its citizens, ENGOs can play a large role in both mobilizing the masses to care about the environment, and using pressure to make political gains. Yet in China, through regulations, these ENGOs are supposed to be hampered. The corporatist structure of the RRSSO prevents competition or collaboration, and requires strict registration practices. Yet Chinese ENGOs have used three strategies to overcome these regulations. First, they self-

regulate their activities; second, they use their connections and guanxi to overcome registration barriers and influence policy; and third, they use mass media to influence the public on environmental issues. The further development of these techniques, along with government policy scaling back on corporatist regulations, would go a long way to making the 1.4 billion people that make up the world's largest country more environmentally-aware.

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A Strategic Sham: Explaining Beijing's Feigned Interest in Iranian Oil and Gas Resources

Jackson Neagli

ABSTRACT

With the passage of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran is expected to ramp up oil and gas production as foreign firms and capital re-enter the Islamic Republic. Beijing is sure to be a target for future Iranian oil and gas exports, as China is projected to drive global energy demand growth into the mid-2030s or 2040s. The completion of three crucial infrastructure projects—China's One Belt One Road initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and the Iran-Pakistan pipeline—would bundle Iranian oil and gas exports to the PRC, and create path dependency-inducing infrastructure links tethering Iranian production to Chinese consumption for the long term. China has expressed interest in these infrastructure linkages, which are appealing due to the relative security of the overland Iran-China export route. However, for Beijing, practical concerns—feasibility issues, competing infrastructure projects, and the diversity imperative of Chinese energy security strategy—militate strongly against the attractiveness of deepening Sino-Iranian energy ties. This article explores the likelihood of realizing Sino-Iranian energy infrastructure linkages, eventually concluding that Beijing's interest in developing Sino-Iranian infrastructure linkages was likely feigned, a geostrategic maneuver intended to put downward price pressure on Chinese oil and gas imports from other international producers, namely Russia and Saudi Arabia.

INTRODUCTION

Spurred by massive infrastructure build outs and urbanization campaigns, China will drive global energy demand growth into the mid-2030s or 2040s.¹ The EIA's 2016 World Energy Outlook (reference case) predicts that Chinese natural gas demand will increase from 5.1tcf in 2012 to 27.5tcf in 2040, constituting more than 25% of world gas demand growth over that period, and exceeding the projected demand growth of OECD states by 2.3tcf.² The same EIA projections predict that Chinese liquid fuel consumption will increase from 10.2 mbbbl/day in 2012 to 16.4mbbl/day in 2040, 10.3 times the liquid fuel consumption increase of OECD states over the same period.³ China, however, lacks the domestic hydrocarbon resources to quench its prodigious appetite: China imports 30% of its domestic gas consumption and nearly 55% of its domestic oil consumption.⁴

As OECD oil and gas demand continues to decline over the next two decades, hydrocarbon exporters will intensify their scramble to secure a place in China's hydrocarbon import regime in order to harness their own economies to Chinese growth. Iran, a hydrocarbon-rich state with historic economic ties to China, will attempt to capitalize on Chinese oil and gas demand growth by tethering its considerable reserves to Chinese demand sources. However, following the UN's 2016 implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ("JCPOA"), Iran will face a series of unique challenges in staking its claim to a slice of Chinese hydrocarbon market share.

Whether Iran retains or expands its share of Chinese oil and gas markets over the next two decades as other low cost producers turn to Asian markets will depend on the completion of path-dependency-inducing infrastructure projects that would bundle Iranian oil

and gas exports to the PRC, shackling Iranian supply to Chinese demand in the long term. The success or failure of three infrastructure projects in particular - China's One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR), the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and the Iran-Pakistan Pipeline (IP pipeline) - will dictate whether or not Iran is able to expand its share of Chinese hydrocarbon markets over the next two decades.

China has expressed an interest in developing all three of these crucial oil and gas infrastructure projects. However, there is a substantial possibility that Chinese overtures to Iranian producers and Pakistani intermediaries are disingenuous: current Sino-Russian gas cooperation on the Power of Siberia pipeline, the proliferation of Sino-Saudi joint refining ventures, and the waning salience of China's "Malacca dilemma," suggest that China has little practical incentive to devote time and resources (not to mention political capital) towards Sino-Iranian oil and gas infrastructure. Especially in light of China's current strategy of pursuing energy security through diversification, this investigation finds it probable that China's apparent interest in Iranian energy resources is a geostrategic power play designed to put downward pressure on the price of China-bound oil and gas imports from other suppliers - namely Saudi Arabia and Russia. That Riyadh and Moscow's state owned oil enterprises are in the midst of a well-publicized price war to enhance their Chinese market share supports this hypothesis.⁵ Additionally, Chinese NOCs have a history of initiating attractive oil and gas import agreements (in this case, bundling Iranian oil and gas exports), only to balk once a more attractive supplier makes a counter-offer.

This investigation of Iran's potential future share of Chinese oil and gas markets unfolds in four sections. The first section provides background information on the current state of Sino-Iranian energy relations. The second section highlights China's "Malacca Dilemma," and considers the strategic importance of Iranian hydrocarbon resources to the Chinese import regime. The third section considers OBOR, CPEC, and the IP

pipeline, and examines how, if completed, these three infrastructure projects would enhance Sino-Iranian oil and gas trade. The final section presents evidence suggesting that the three infrastructure projects are likely to fail, and that Chinese overtures to Iranian oil and gas producers are a strategic measure intended principally to put downward pressure on Saudi and Russian oil and gas imports.

THE CURRENT STATE OF SINO-IRANIAN ENERGY RELATIONS

Iran is home to some of Beijing's largest upstream projects: Between 2005 and 2010, Chinese firms signed contracts worth \$120 billion in the Iranian energy sector.⁶ However, progress on these projects has been underwhelming - Tehran suspended China National Offshore Oil Company's (CNOOC) North Pars development contract in 2011 for lack of progress, China National Petroleum Company (CNPC) withdrew from South Pars in 2012, and CNPC and Sinopec are both reportedly behind schedule in their respective development of the Azadegan and Yadavaran oil fields.⁷ In recent years, sanctions have made it difficult for Chinese NOCs to invest in Iran while simultaneously forcing the Iranian government to forgo the replacement of hydrocarbon industry capital, resulting in massive inefficiencies.⁸ During the late UN sanctions period (2010-2016), China remained the only major consumer of Iranian oil resources.⁹ Though Chinese imports of Iranian oil declined during the late sanctions period, plummeting 20% between 2011 and 2012, Sino-Iranian energy trade did not suffer unduly - in 2012, Iranian oil still constituted 8% of Chinese crude imports.¹⁰

China played a critical role in the UN Security Council's passage of the JCPOA, which provides Iran substantial relief from both American and UN sanctions.¹¹ China being the largest export destination for Iranian oil, many speculated that the deal would lead to a massive boom in Sino-Iranian energy trade.¹² Indeed, less than a month after the JCPOA's implementation in January 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping signed a

memorandum of understanding on a 10-year, \$600 billion Sino-Iranian bilateral trading framework.¹³ However, as figures three and four of the Appendix display, JCPOA implementation has not had an immediate impact on the Sino-Iranian crude trade.

Iranian crude exports to China have not substantially increased following JCPOA implementation for two reasons. First, the Iranian oil industry, which has been off limits to foreign investors for years, remains desperately outdated and inefficient, and thus incapable of rapidly ramping up production.¹⁴ Second, China has begun to diversify its import sources in order to reduce the geopolitical risk posed by supply disruption from any one exporter.¹⁵

The present odds are stacked against Iran as it attempts to carve out a larger share of Chinese oil markets. Through September 2016, Iran accounts for just over 8% of Chinese crude imports, as opposed to roughly 14% apiece for both Russia and Saudi Arabia.¹⁶ Iran's share of Chinese oil imports has hovered around 8% since 2012, when it plummeted from 11% in 2011 due to sanctions.¹⁷

Recent technological advancements in oil and gas production and transport do not favor Iran's chances of breaking into Chinese markets. The increasing accessibility of unconventional oil and gas reserves have the effect of "moving" global reserves away from Iran, while the growth of LNG trade is steadily globalizing currently regional gas markets, decreasing the importance of Iran's strategic location vis-à-vis China.¹⁸ While Iran is seeking to "join the international LNG club" according to National Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC) managing director Alireza Kameli, assessments from the European Commission suggest that Iran's first LNG shipments remain over two years away.¹⁹

Growing global gas demand also undermines Iran's future position in world markets.²⁰ Because sanctions have prevented Iran from developing a regional pipeline network or LNG infrastructure, as global gas demand has increased, countries have locked themselves into long-term LNG contracts or built path-dependency-

inducing pipeline linkages to fulfill their gas demand.²¹ Thus, increasing global gas demand has crowded Iran out of future market share while simultaneously lowering gas prices, especially in Asia.²²

IRAN'S ENERGY SECURITY SIGNIFICANCE – THE MALACCA DILEMMA

Oil supply security is China's primary energy security concern.²³ Approximately 80% of China's oil imports pass through the Strait of Malacca, a maritime choke point patrolled by a substantial US Navy presence.²⁴ China's "Malacca Dilemma" – finding oil (and LNG) import routes that circumvent US-controlled Malacca – has played a defining role in Chinese energy security strategy since 2003, when President Hu Jintao elevated it to public salience.²⁵

Tehran is in a position (literally) to benefit long-term from Chinese energy security concerns. Straddling the hydrocarbon-rich Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea regions, Iran's location affords it great importance in the eyes of Chinese energy security strategists as a potential overland pipeline route for Persian Gulf and Central Asian oil and gas.²⁶ Currently, China is serviced by three oil pipelines – connected to Russia, Kazakhstan, and Myanmar – accounting for only 1.1 mmbbl/day, less than 15% of 2015 imports.²⁷ If Iran is to capitalize on skyrocketing Chinese oil and gas demand, it will do so because of the relative security of its export routes and China's (unguaranteed) continuing preoccupation with the "Malacca Dilemma." However, the critical infrastructure linkages that would allow Iranian resources to circumvent Malacca all remain in the planning stages. The construction of these crucial path-dependency-inducing infrastructure projects will determine whether Iran gains a hefty, and potentially irreplaceable, share of future Chinese fossil fuel imports.

CRUCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE LINKAGES: OBOR, CPEC, AND THE IP PIPELINE

This section provides a brief introduction to the three infrastructure projects – OBOR, CPEC, and

the IP pipeline – that must be completed if Iran is to substantially expand its share of Chinese hydrocarbon markets in the next two decades.

One Belt One Road (“OBOR”)

OBOR, proposed by China in 2013 as a means of connecting Eurasian economies into a PRC-led economic zone, envisions a road, rail, and pipeline infrastructure network stretching from China to Central Asia and eventually Europe.²⁸ China has already earmarked \$115 billion for OBOR and associated projects, and adopted a domestic policy framework to incentivize private Chinese investment for infrastructure projects along the route.²⁹ It is no accident that many of the countries along the OBOR route (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Iran) contain substantial hydrocarbon resources.³⁰ Iran is a critical node in China’s OBOR strategy:³¹ the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran North-South railway was completed in 2014,³² and in early 2016, China finished the Zhejiang-Tehran railway, which slashes freight transit from Eastern China to Iran by more than 30 days.³³

OBOR’s current pipeline infrastructure (the China-Central Asia pipeline network), through it does not yet extend to Iran, offers Iran an opportunity to access the network of pipelines feeding Chinese gas consumption. The construction of pipelines often necessitates the prior construction of parallel roads or railroads: If Iran plans to connect itself to China via a direct pipeline link, the Zhejiang-Tehran railway represents a necessary first step towards construction. Additionally, the North-South railway affords Iran a potential infrastructure bridge to the China-Central Asia gas pipeline network and the Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (“CPEC”)

CPEC comprises a \$46 billion, 3000km economic project intended to connect Western China to Pakistan’s Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea.³⁴ CPEC

includes a natural gas pipeline connecting Kashgar, China to an LNG terminal at Gwadar.³⁵ The completion of CPEC’s LNG terminal and pipeline would allow Chinese gas imports to circumvent the Strait of Malacca.

Iran’s participation in CPEC would have positive implications for both China and Pakistan: electricity-poor Pakistan would benefit from a relationship with its hydrocarbon-rich neighbor, while Beijing would benefit greatly from the connection of Iranian gas reserves to CPEC’s pipeline project.³⁶ JCPOA implementation sent Pakistani trade representatives scrambling to Tehran with the intention of winning Iranian business interests, and Iran has since agreed to consider CPEC participation.³⁷

The Iran-Pakistan Pipeline (“IP”)

If the CPEC pipeline succeeds, the IP gas pipeline will complete a critical infrastructure link between Iran and China. In 2013, Iran and Pakistan agreed upon the \$1.5 billion IP pipeline, which would connect Iran’s South Pars field to Nawabshah via Gwadar, but sanctions put the project on hold.³⁸ Iran has already completed its 560-mile portion of the pipeline, but the remaining 50 miles between Gwadar and the Iranian border (already connected by road) remain incomplete.³⁹

JCPOA implementation sparked renewed interest in the IP pipeline. So far, Iran has opted not to exercise the agreement’s penalty clause for Pakistan’s failure to complete its end of the project, indicating that Tehran remains keen on the pipeline.⁴⁰ Additionally, China has agreed to help Pakistan build its 485-mile section of the pipeline, which is expected to be complete by 2018.⁴¹

While energy-poor Pakistan presents a substantial market for Iranian gas, Tehran understands the larger prize at stake. Both Iran’s ambassador to China and the managing director of the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) have expressed interest in extending the IP pipeline to China, likely through connection to the CPEC pipeline at Gwadar.⁴²

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: THE GEOSTRATEGY OF FEIGNED SINO-IRANIAN ENERGY COOPERATION

Iran's connection to the OBOR pipeline network and the completion of the CPEC and IP pipelines would tether Iranian hydrocarbon production to Chinese consumption, carving Iran a foothold in China's domestic energy market. Unfortunately for Tehran, the near-term completion of these projects appears unlikely, due to (1) competing infrastructure projects, (2) feasibility issues, and (3) the waning salience of the "Malacca Dilemma." These strong disincentives against Sino-Iranian energy cooperation, combined with Chinese firms' history of leading on potential energy exporters, suggest that Beijing's energy overtures to Tehran were disingenuous. The currently-raging price war between China-bound Russian and Saudi crudes hints that the goal of feigned Sino-Iranian energy cooperation was to put downward pressure on oil prices from two of China's key suppliers.

Competing Infrastructure Projects

Competing infrastructure projects constitute the largest disincentive to the completion of OBOR and the CPEC and IP pipelines, as competing projects have the potential to lock China into alternative import relationships rendering OBOR, CPEC, and the IP pipeline redundant. Several infrastructure projects – particularly, Sino-Saudi refining ventures, the Power of Siberia pipeline, and the China-Central Asia pipeline – constitute potential spoilers for Iran.

Sino-Saudi Joint Refining Ventures

China's largest crude supplier for the past decade, Saudi Arabia occupies a good position to expand its share of the Chinese import market.⁴³ Since the early 2000s, Aramco has pursued a strategy of chaining Saudi production to Chinese consumption through joint refining ventures with Chinese NOCs.⁴⁴ By investing in Chinese refineries equipped for Saudi crudes, the Kingdom has secured itself a customer base

in one of the world's most rapidly expanding energy markets. In 2007, Sinopec (50%), Aramco (25%), and ExxonMobil (25%) partnered on a refinery equipped for Saudi crude in Fujian, China, expanding its output by 200,000bbl/day.⁴⁵ Aramco is currently engaged with CNPC regarding the construction of additional joint venture refineries in Yunnan, Qingdao, and Sichuan provinces.⁴⁶ While Saudi Arabia's expanding share of China's downstream petroleum market does not necessarily preclude Iranian infrastructure projects, Sino-Saudi refining ventures shrink the market for Iranian exports.

The Power of Siberia

In May 2014, Gazprom and CNPC signed a 30-year sales agreement to supply China with eastern Russian gas via the Power of Siberia pipeline.⁴⁷ The 3000km project, which began construction in September 2014, will provide China with 38bcm (1.3tcf) per year after its 2019 completion.⁴⁸ If the Power of Siberia and other currently approved pipelines and purchase contracts (none include Iran) go ahead, these agreements alone would cover 75% of Chinese gas imports up to 2030, leaving Iran and other (LNG-capable) suppliers to squabble over the last 25%.⁴⁹ While not a death sentence for Sino-Iranian gas pipeline projects, the Power of Siberia substantially crowds Iran's potential share of the Chinese gas market.

The China-Central Asia Pipeline

Finally, the current state of OBOR's China-Central Asia gas pipeline network militates against Iranian gas exports to China through OBOR pipeline infrastructure. This seems counterintuitive – Iran is already connected to Turkmenistan, the primary exporter in the pipeline network, via the Dauletabad-Sarakhs-Khangiran pipeline, so it would appear simple for Iran to use the DSK route as an entrée to China's Central Asian gas import network. However, due to Iran's sanctions-crippled production infrastructure and domestic opposition to gas exports, Iran currently

imports gas from Turkmenistan through the DSK pipeline.⁵⁰ Because Turkmenistan profits greatly from its exports to Iran, has massive (256tcf)⁵¹ reserves, a history of price disputes with Iran, and most importantly, a desire to increase its Chinese market share,⁵² it is unlikely that Turkmenistan (and therefore the greater China-Central Asia pipeline network) will ever become an Iranian gas export outlet.⁵³

Other Noteworthy Projects

A host of additional infrastructure projects threaten OBOR and the CPEC and IP pipelines. Washington, opposed to the IP pipeline, backs the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline (TAPI), which, if completed, would disincentivize Pakistan's completion of the IP pipeline.⁵⁴ The respective 2013 and 2014 completion of majority Chinese-owned gas and oil pipelines from Myanmar's Andaman coast to Yunnan province enable China to import up to 12bcm(.42tcf)/year of gas and 240,000bbl/day of oil around Malacca, eroding Iran's strategic significance while increasing Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei's Chinese oil and gas market shares at Iran's expense.⁵⁵ Finally, the proliferation of privately-owned "teapot" refineries equipped for Russian crude oil in Qingdao has contributed to a boom in Sino-Russian crude trade.⁵⁶

Feasibility Issues

While OBOR is a relatively secure project, both the CPEC and IP pipelines face a key security issue threatening their feasibility: transiting Baluchistan. Baluchistan, Pakistan's southwestern province, remains underdeveloped and home to ethnic militants who demand autonomy over the region.⁵⁷ Gwadar, the southern terminus of the CPEC pipeline, is located in Baluchistan, and the IP pipeline would transit the whole of the province from west to east. Any attempt to build a pipeline through Baluchistan would face challenges posed by Baluch insurgents.⁵⁸

The CPEC pipeline faces even graver feasibility concerns due to its proposed path through the

Karakoram mountain range. Though a road currently exists from Pakistan to China through the Khunjerab pass, building a pipeline through mountainous terrain at over 4500m elevation poses unique challenges that will likely prevent short-term construction of the CPEC pipeline.

Malacca's Waning Salience

As China has embraced global markets, Beijing has come to accept China's economic reliance on international trade. In the Chinese oil industry, this acceptance of dependence on global markets is manifested by the slowly decreasing prominence of the "Malacca Dilemma" in China's oil import strategy. Beijing now understands that the United States also depends on the international oil market, and that a Malacca blockade (or series of interdictions) would deeply harm American interests, as well as those of Washington's allies.⁵⁹ The recent proliferation of bilateral Sino-American fora like the Strategic Economic Dialogue, Environmental Cooperation Framework, and Strategic Security Dialogue further reassure Beijing that an established framework exists to diplomatically resolve Sino-American disputes, making a Malacca blockade even more unlikely.⁶⁰ Though the Malacca dilemma remains an important consideration in Chinese energy security strategy, as it decreases in salience, Beijing will become less willing to pay a premium for hydrocarbon exports that circumvent the Strait, thus dis-incentivizing Beijing's pursuit of expensive infrastructure projects to tap into "strategically located" Iranian resources.

More broadly, since the late 1990s, China's energy security strategy has evolved from one of attempted autarky to diversification. In 1997, then-Premier Li Peng called for "Any and all means...to achieve the broader goal of diversifying the sources of China's energy supply."⁶¹ Subsequently, Chinese NOCs have expanded exploration and production activities to more than 20 countries with the aim of mitigating the potential impact a supply disruption from any single supplier

state.⁶² By constructing OBOR and the CPEC and IP pipelines, and bundling Iranian oil and gas imports, Beijing would create a massive path dependent import relationship with a single state (Iran), thus controverting the diversity of supply imperative at the core of modern Chinese energy security strategy, and granting Tehran substantial political leverage over Beijing. If Chinese plans for Sino-Iranian energy cooperation are genuine, their execution would constitute a massive tactical blunder by Chinese energy security standards.

Conclusion: Beijing's Feint to Tehran Prods Moscow and Riyadh

Chinese state-owned firms have a history of feigning interest in attractive export agreements with international suppliers to strengthen their bargaining position vis-à-vis other exporters. CNPC's recent failure to follow through with the Power of Siberia-2 pipeline and Line D of the China-Central Asia pipeline exemplify this strategy. In 2015, CNPC indefinitely delayed construction on Power of Siberia-2, a pipeline planned to transport Russian gas to China via the so-called "western route."⁶³ Similarly, in 2017, after more than a year of delays, CNPC finally suspended line D of the China-Central Asia pipeline, effectively cutting Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan out of China's Central Asian gas import scheme.^{64,65} The negotiation of these abortive gas infrastructure projects took place in the midst of a softening of East Asian energy markets, as China sought to tap into the emerging Australian LNG export market and poach Middle-Eastern LNG imports no longer required by Japan as Tokyo restarts the country's nuclear generation program.⁶⁶ By negotiating contracts with many exporters at the same time, China successfully pressured all potential suppliers to keep prices low. In 2015, Qatargas, a longtime LNG supplier of Japan, made concessions to PetroChina on an existing gas contract by skewing deliveries towards the high demand winter months.⁶⁷ China benefited again from its strong bargaining position in 2016, when it agreed to a 10-year, 650,000 metric ton per-annum LNG deal with

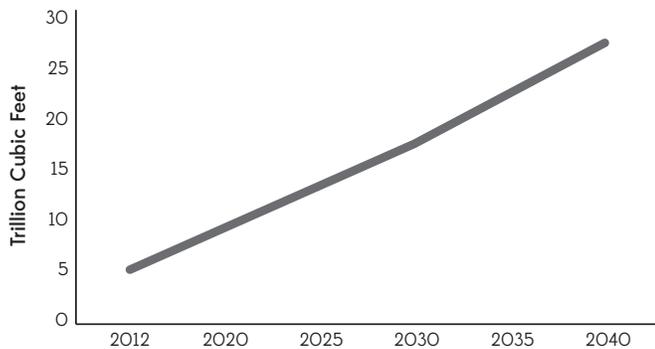
Chevron, expected to be fulfilled by Australia's Gorgon, Wheatstone, and North West Shelf fields.⁶⁸

In the case of feigned Sino-Iranian energy cooperation, Beijing's aim was likely to strengthen its bargaining position with respect to its Russian and Saudi export partners. By threatening to import Iranian oil and gas, China threatened to decrease its demand for Russian and Saudi hydrocarbons. Rather than call Beijing's bluff, Moscow and Riyadh appear to have gone all in – in order to enhance their respective attractiveness to Chinese buyers, and thus secure greater shares of skyrocketing Chinese energy demand, Russia and Saudi Arabia are in the midst of a well-publicized crude oil price war.⁶⁹ Gazprom responded to China's apparent interest in Iranian gas exports by cancelling its proposed LNG terminal at Vladivostok (which would have served primarily Japan and South Korea) in favor of the Power of Siberia pipeline, which will benefit China immensely.

Thus, it appears that China's apparent interest in Iranian energy resources following the JCPOA constitutes little more than leverage for China's negotiations with other global energy producers. Even if Beijing were genuinely interested in Iranian oil and gas, the completion of the OBOR, CPEC, and IP pipeline infrastructure linkages would remain questionable due to feasibility issues, competing infrastructure projects, and the diversity-oriented nature of Chinese energy-security strategy. As Chinese oil consumption increases towards 2040, Iran's China-bound oil exports will remain steady, but overall Iranian oil market share will likely decrease as the likes of Saudi Arabia and Russia expand their respective shares of the Chinese oil market. It is unlikely that Iran will become a substantial supplier of gas to China until it develops LNG infrastructure, which will be difficult given domestic opposition to gas exports,⁷⁰ and continuing American sanctions against financial entities doing business in Iran. Even if Iran develops substantial LNG export capacity in the next two years, (as NIGEC has promised), Iranian LNG exports would constitute a diversification of Chinese gas import strategy rather than its centerpiece, a location occupied by the Power of Siberia and China-Central Asia pipelines.⁷¹

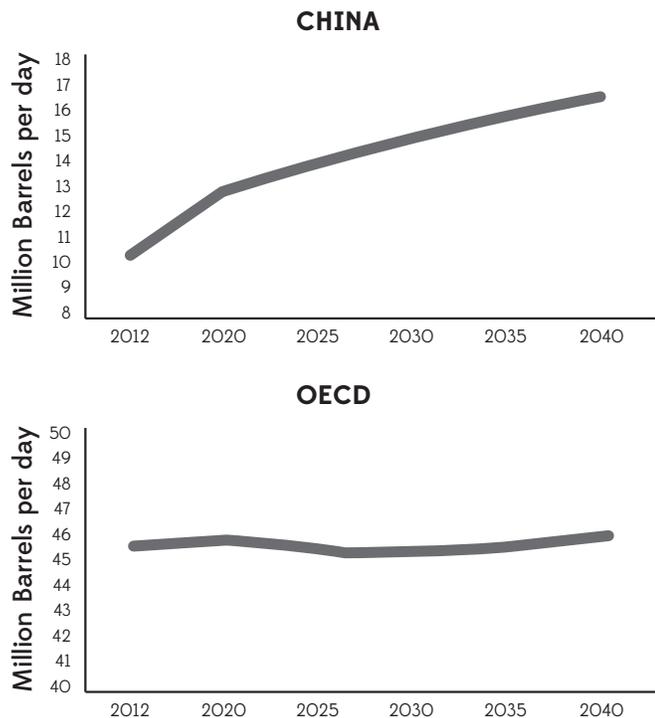
APPENDIX

Figure 1. Chinese National Gas Demand through 2040 (EIA Projection)



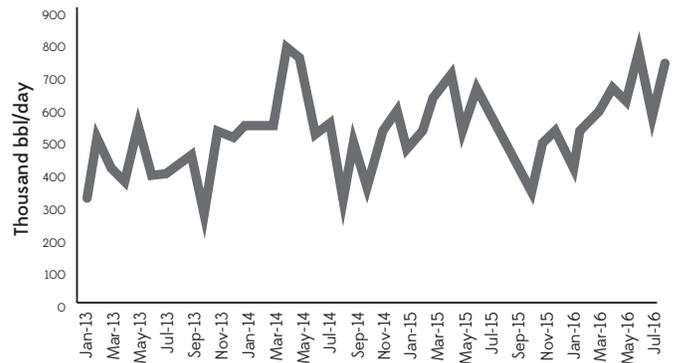
Source: “Chapter 3. Natural Gas,” in International Energy Outlook 2016. U.S. Energy Information Administration Independent Statistics and Analysis, May 11, 2016. (Reference Case)

Figure 2. Chinese Liquid Fuels Consumption through 2040 vs. OECD Liquid Fuels Consumption through 2040



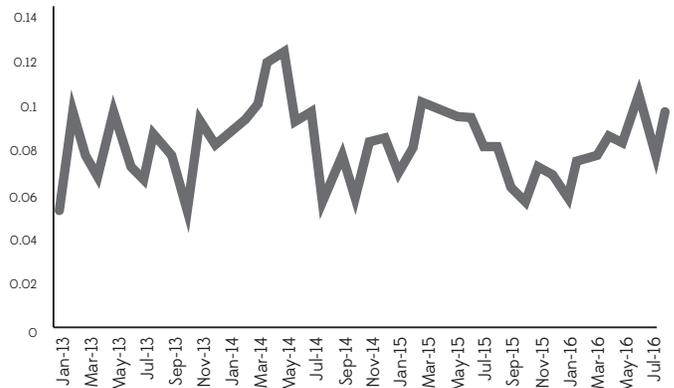
Source: “Chapter 2. Petroleum and other liquid fuels,” in International Energy Outlook 2016. U.S. Energy Information Administration Statistics and Analysis, May 11, 2016. (Reference Case)

Figure 3. Chinese Crude Imports from Iran



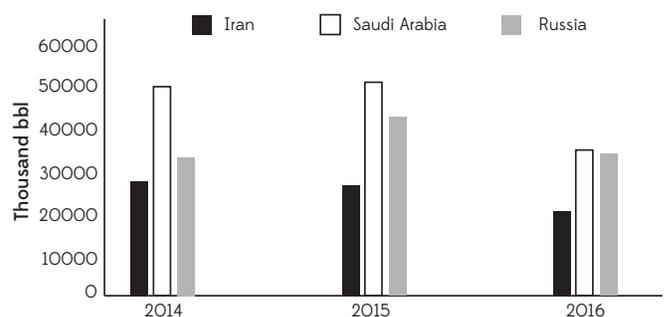
Source: “Asia’s Iranian Crude Oil Imports.” Reuters Graphics, October 2016.

Figure 4. Iranian-Origin Crude Exports as a Proportion of Total Chinese Crude Imports



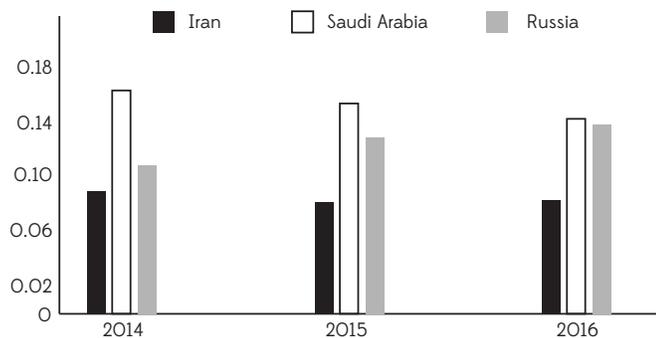
Source: Iranian export data to China from “Asia’s Iranian Crude Oil Imports.” Reuters Graphics, October 2016; Total Chinese import data from “JODI-Oil World Database,” JodiOil, November 20, 2016.

Figure 5. Iranian, Saudi, and Russian Crude Exports to China: 2014-2016



Source: Import data by country from “Monthly Customs Reports,” China Customs Statistics, 2016; Total Chinese import data from “JODI-Oil World Database,” JodiOil, November 20, 2016. 2016 data through August.

Figure 6. Crude Imports from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia as a Proportion of total PRC Crude Imports



Source: Import data by country from “Monthly Customs Reports,” China Customs Statistics, 2016; Total Chinese import data from “JODI-Oil World Database,” JodiOil, November 20, 2016. 2016 data through August.

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Jackson wrote this manuscript in Fall 2016 for POLI 401: Energy Policy. He has been conducting research on China and Chinese energy strategy since his freshman year at Rice. Given Beijing's fervent support for the JCPOA, and the pre-existing oil trade between China and Iran, he wanted to explore how the re-opening of Iran to world markets might affect Sino-Iranian energy trade. To his surprise, he found that China's interest in increased oil and gas imports from Iran made little sense from a cost-benefit perspective. It was only when he connected the Russia/Saudi Arabia price war to China's apparent interest in Iranian resources that he realized Beijing's overtures to Tehran had ulterior motives. He would like to extend sincere thanks to Dr. Steven W. Lewis and Dr. Jim Krane for reviewing this manuscript and offering their extremely insightful expert feedback.

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Life is Too Fast: Looking into South Korea's Antibiotics Overconsumption

Justin Park

ABSTRACT

South Korea today is said to be plagued with the nationally pervasive social pressure of having to get things done fast. The speed of everything has created a farcical nickname of this society as *bballi bballi* society, stemming from the Korean word *bballi*, meaning fast. While it is widely accepted among scholars today that the culture of *bballi bballi* is manifested in many aspects of Korean society, there exist only a few studies that explore its implications in the healthcare sector. In this article, the author raises the question of how this high-pressure pace manifests in South Korea's healthcare system with a special focus on patient access to antibiotics. In South Korea, doctors prescribe antibiotics frequently and easily, even for simple ailments or symptoms that have not been tested for bacterial nosology. Interestingly, this goes hand in hand with the nation's awareness of the harms of overprescription of antibiotics. By way of synthesizing the currently available studies in diverse areas of public health, cultural anthropology, and popular cultural studies, this author attempts to address the intersection between the cultural norms of fast pace and its manifestation in healthcare system.

ANTIBIOTICS OVERCONSUMPTION IN SOUTH KOREA

Public health data and statistics often serve as crucial and reliable indicators of the general welfare and prosperity of a nation. This is clearly demonstrated in the case of South Korea, a country noted for its exceptional economic growth and social development in the past several decades. As a salient reflection of Korea's recent advancements, total life expectancy at birth has increased from 65.8 in 1980 to 81.0 in 2011. The total mortality rate for males dropped precipitously from 307.1 per 1000 adults in 1980 to 95.0 per 1000 adults in 2011; likewise, the rate for females decreased from 152.7 to 32.0.¹ As such, various aspects of public health among the South Korean population exhibit a trend that is overall optimistic and promising. Against this backdrop, however, there are many misuses and abuses of health-related resources occurring on a nationwide scale in South Korea. Most prominent among them is the alarming rate of overconsumption of antibiotics.

The high rate of antibiotics consumption in South Korea is a thoroughly documented phenomenon. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, of which South Korea is an official member,

reveals that South Korea's defined daily dosage per 1,000 inhabitants is 31.7. While this dataset collected in 2014 is not fully comprehensive as it does not include select few OECD members including Japan, it suggests South Korea's rate of antibiotics consumption to be one of the highest in the world—Canada is at 17.3, the UK is at 19.7, and Italy is at 29.1 (a close second to Korea).² The Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy provides further evidence on the validity of Korea's excessively high antibiotics consumption rate. According to the CDDEP, which utilizes a different methodology and algorithm from those of OECD to compute their figures, South Korea used 28,295 units of antibiotics per 1,000 inhabitants in 2014, while its peer East Asian countries reported significantly lower numbers—Japan used 17,170 units, while China used 9,894.³

Antibiotics are powerful chemical aids used to facilitate treatment of patients infected with microbial pathogens, but when bacterial nosology is considered, overuse of antibiotics poses a significant threat to the integrity of human body as it can result in the development of resistant bacteria.⁴ In this light, the national level of overprescription and overconsumption of antibiotics posits

a serious long-term negative effect on South Korea's public health. Introduction of resistant bacterial strains is a major health risk, and studies today show that South Korea may already be in grave danger. Isolates of *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, a common bacterial pathogen known to cause respiratory tract infections and pneumonia in humans, that were collected in South Korea exhibited the highest rate of resistance to antibiotics among all geographical areas that were included in the study. About 87.6% of *S. pneumoniae* strains of *S. pneumoniae* found in South Korea were resistant to erythromycin, which is one of the most common antibiotics available in the global pharmaceutical market, whereas only 4.7% of strains found in Sweden were shown to be resistant.⁵ Such prevalence of resistant strains in South Korea is a force to be reckoned with, as there are fewer therapeutic options available for patients with infections caused by resistant bacterial strains.⁶

Unfortunately, it appears that the pattern of antibiotics overconsumption observed today in Korea will continue to be the norm in the future. Kyungwon Lee of the Research Institute of Bacterial Resistance at Yonsei University predicts that South Korea will continue to observe increasing strains of bacteria with resistance to antibiotics currently available in the market. Lee cautiously questions whether the pharmaceutical industry would be able to keep up with the constant emergence of resistant strains and strongly recommends that resources be invested in developing new means to combat this pressing concern.⁷

Despite the overpowering wealth of data supportive of Korea's problem with antibiotics consumption, currently, scholarly attempt at dissecting the phenomenon and identifying the cultural undercurrent associated with this overuse is conspicuously lacking. The intent of this study is to fill this void by analyzing the current situation in connection to South Korea's unique culture and present a synthesis of critique and prospect. The intention of this research is not to single out a clear-cut cause for the overconsumption of antibiotics but rather to examine the way cultural and social factors and certain national behavior, if any, influence and reinforce each other. Here, I am particularly interested in *bballi bballi* culture which

has been lately attracting attention among researchers of Korean society and its cultural norms. *Bballi bballi* means "fast and faster." Critics say that South Korean society is driven by the urge to get things done fast, at times at the expense of quality of work. Thus, this article will attempt to address the intersection between the cultural norms of fast-paced life and its manifestation in healthcare systems by synthesizing the currently available studies in areas of public health and popular cultural studies.

THE DEMANDS OF KOREAN PATIENTS

While a formal and comprehensive approach to analyze the cause of Korea's antibiotics overconsumption is currently unavailable, several accounts presented by doctors and professionals in the past provide us a helpful clue with regard to the remarkable role culture may play in this matter. In 2006, Korean congresswoman and pharmacist Bokshim Jang urged the public for a change in the nation's attitude toward the use of antibiotics by stating that Korean citizens have the tendency to want to get better faster, despite the fact that many ailments, especially the common cold, are viral in nature and require time for treatment.⁸ An anonymous doctor at a clinic in Jeju City, which reported a 95.96% antibiotic prescription rate in 2005, was quoted in an article as saying that many patients prefer strong and effective antibiotics for the supposed faster healing time, and regardless of his professional opinion, he finds himself unable to deny the patients' demands.⁹ Similar anecdotal accounts, though many are attributed to anonymous sources, are found across a plethora of interviews with physicians. Weekly DongA (a major print news source in Korea), in its comprehensive exposé on antibiotics overconsumption in Korea, details an anonymous doctor's complaints regarding patients' incessant and stubborn demands for strong antibiotics. The doctor adds that patients often justify their needs of antibiotics by sharing about their "upcoming exams," and although the doctor is fully aware of the negative effects of unnecessary use of antibiotics, he is not willing to argue with the patient.¹⁰

There exists a recurring theme in these accounts made by doctors and public health professionals—they suggest

that patients' desire to quickly get better wrongly translates to their uninformed and misled demands for antibiotics prescription. It is important to note that patients "demanding" antibiotics from their doctors is not an occurrence observed exclusively in Korea. A group of American family physicians published a comparative case study paper in 2001 in the *Journal of Family Practice* identifying several ways in which patients pressure physicians for an antibiotics prescription in acute respiratory infections, or the common cold.¹¹ This study highlights the influence patients' behavioral cues and verbal demands have on the clinician's decision-making on antibiotics prescriptions. While the findings suggest that it is not only the patients in Korea that may prefer strong antibiotics to other forms of medication or lack thereof, the cases discussed in this U.S.-based study do not include one critical element that is almost ubiquitously mentioned in the accounts provided by Korean doctors—the element of time and urgency, as shown in the patients' apparent need to get better faster. This element of speed deserves a close and more nuanced inspection in the context of Korea's unique culture.

WHAT IS BBALLI BBALLI?

The emphasis on efficiency and speed is an all too familiar concept in South Korea, where the social pressure of having to get things done fast is said to be nationally pervasive.¹² This cultural norm of speed is referred to as *bballi bballi* by both sociologists and laymen alike—the nickname stems from the Korean word *bballi*, meaning fast.¹³ In currently available literature on *bballi bballi*, scholars are split on the origins of this lifestyle: Some attribute its rise to Korea's extensive history of colonialism, warfare, and militarism, while some claim that Korea's aggressive approach to economic development, particularly through the means of exportation, naturally promoted and emphasized the advantages of being fast and efficient.¹⁴ Within these varying theories exists a universal agreement that this fast-paced lifestyle is largely driven and perpetuated by competition.

While *bballi bballi* may have some rather farcical and superficial symptoms (such as the common stereotype of

Koreans always eating too fast or being impatient with long wait times), this social phenomenon of high-pressure pace has far more resounding and profound implications. On one hand, *bballi bballi* is commonly regarded as the fundamental drive that thrust the impoverished and war-torn South Korea of the 1950s into its period of immense economic recovery and development in the subsequent decades, a progress that was so astounding that it was later dubbed "Miracle of the Han River".¹⁵ On the other hand, *bballi bballi* is often seen as a toxic characteristic of Korean society with destructive outcomes due to the nation's prioritization of getting things done quickly over taking the time to assure quality and safety. This has been witnessed in several forms of tragedy in different sectors of society. Buildings built with poor architectural integrity have collapsed (ex. Sampoong Department Store in 1995, Gyeongju Resort Gym in 2014). Korean academia took a critical hit when one of Korea's most renowned scientists was caught committing severe ethical violations to meet the public's high expectations for revolutionary results in a short time. Today in Korea, one factory worker dies every five hours from various industrial disasters often caused by ignoring regulations and bypassing precautions.¹⁶

As such, it appears that Korea's problem with antibiotics overconsumption can also be interpreted as one of many harmful byproducts of *bballi bballi*. If there truly is a substantial correlation between the two phenomena as suggested by the aforementioned accounts by doctors and professionals, what circumstances and mechanisms are at play? How does a nation's tempo of life translate to its citizens' antibiotics prescription and consumption patterns?

THE PRESSURE OF BBALLI BBALLI ON KOREAN PATIENTS

The most obvious logic behind the association between *bballi bballi* and antibiotics overconsumption is as follows: people need to get better faster to keep up with the society's pace, sickness becomes a hindrance they cannot afford, and those who get sick demand antibiotics for their supposed effect on facilitating

recovery. We will first inspect how the culture of *bballi bballi* affects the attitude and behavior of those who become sick in Korea.

OECD statistics indicate that among its peer member nations, South Korea is generally overworked while grossly undercompensated. In 2015, South Korea recorded 2,113 average annual hours worked per worker, which puts South Korea at number three among all OECD member nations, far above the average of 1,766.¹⁷ In the same year, the average annual income for South Korea was far lower than the OECD average; South Korea recorded \$33,110, while the average was \$41,253. Kyushik Bae, a researcher at the Korea Labor Institute, explains that intensive labors and low compensation were critical ingredients in South Korea's successful industrialization, and this unhealthy element of the Korean workforce has been perpetuated with little to no improvement.¹⁸ In fact, the idea of reducing labor hours by means of implementing new laws was recently opposed by various Korean corporations under Park Geun-hye administration.

As represented by above analysis, the South Korean workforce places a significant emphasis on the sheer number of work hours put in by the workers, and as a result, time is a valuable yet limited resource for many. This nationwide disregard for personal wellbeing in exchange for longer work hours and higher productivity may be the very force that pushes sick Koreans to prioritize faster healing time over proper recovery. The rate of preventative medicine in South Korea serves as further data supportive of this pattern of people prioritizing work over personal health. In South Korea, while the pediatric vaccination rate is exceptionally high, the seasonal influenza vaccination rate is relatively low (21.7%). While a myriad of social factors are thought to influence one's decision-making in flu vaccinations, it appears that employment is a significant factor to consider, especially among women. Statistical analyses based on surveys conducted between 2007 and 2010 indicate that unemployed women exhibited a vaccination rate that is 1.195 times higher than that of employed women.¹⁹

A column published in a reputable Korean feminist journal even claims that Koreans must fight for their "right

to be sick." The columnist, who is active under the pen name Banda, asserts that the Korean workforce today does not guarantee the workers' basic right to take the time to recover from their sickness, and that its hyperproductive atmosphere puts an unjustified blame on those that fall ill. Banda claims that in many Korean work settings, where collectivism is the dominant ideology, taking sick days is interpreted as lacking professionalism due to the impact on work productivity that is caused by an "irresponsible" absence. Banda shares her concerns for students in Korea as well, who are similarly pressured to disregard their health in their hypercompetitive academic environment. Missing a day of cram school would be a disadvantage among competing classmates, so students must fight through sickness with the help of strong medication.²⁰

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE ON THE SCIENCE OF ANTIBIOTICS

If Koreans desire a faster cure, why do they consider antibiotics to be the cure—all they need at times of illness? The incontrovertible truth in medicine is that antibiotics are only effective when the ailment is of bacterial etiology. The upper respiratory infection, which is one of the most frequently diagnosed ailments and often referred to as the common cold, is often viral in nature and requires time for the body's immune system to naturally fight the infection in order to recover. Unfortunately, overwhelming evidence suggest that the Korean public prefer antibiotics despite this clearly established biological distinction. In fact, in 2015, 43.52% of the clinics in South Korea are reported to have prescribed antibiotics for patients with upper respiratory infections, when bacterial agents that cause this very infection are exceedingly rare.^{21,22}

There may be a simple and straightforward explanation for this phenomenon—many Koreans simply do not know the science of antibiotics. The lack of public knowledge on antibiotics and the misconception that antibiotic consumption leads to faster healing time may be pervasive among the Korean public. In an effort to gauge the public's awareness on this matter, a survey was conducted from 300 South Korean subjects older than 20. Only 23.3%

of respondents clearly knew the difference between virus and bacteria, and 22.0% claimed that the two are identical in nature. In fact, 23.7% claimed that antibiotics are used only for viral infections, while 29.0% responded that they can be used for both bacterial and viral. Lastly, only 30.0% agreed that taking antibiotics does not have any effect on the recovery period for common cold symptoms.²³ In a separate study that targeted only middle school and high school adolescents, 20.3% responded that antibiotics can kill viruses, while 35.6% responded that antibiotics could cure their cold faster.²⁴ This lack of public knowledge among Koreans becomes especially more concerning when analyzed vis-a-vis peer nations. For example, in the Netherlands, 44.6% of 935 responders aged 16 and over reported that they are aware of antibiotics effectiveness in treating bacterial but not viral infections, and 81.1% did not believe that taking antibiotics helps patients feel better sooner if they have the common cold.²⁵

The lack of public knowledge among Koreans is evident, yet many researchers and doctors assert in unison that proper education on the dangers of antibiotics is severely lacking in South Korea.²⁶ One of the only government-sponsored efforts to educate the public on the correct use of antibiotics took the form of a nationwide campaign in 2011 organized by the Korean Society of Infectious Diseases and the Korean Society of Chemotherapy.²⁷ This campaign, which aimed to educate both the public and healthcare professionals in light of the antibiotics crisis in Korea, targeted mainly on distribution of educational materials. However, it appears that the success of and support toward this two-year campaign was overall underwhelming. Today, their official website is no longer accessible, and any form of data on the progress of this campaign since its inception is unavailable to the public. This lack of success is especially concerning when compared to similar educational campaigns launched in other countries, such as the U.S. and its “Get Smart About Antibiotics” project that has been continuously funded and actively supported since 1995.²⁸

Many doctors themselves are not making appreciable efforts to educate patients and effectively curb the antibiotics

consumption rate. The aforementioned study by Yoo et al. indicates that 71.7% of people surveyed either responded “never” or “almost never” on whether their doctor ever explained to them the effects of antibiotics in regards to the treatment of their ailments.²⁹ On the other hand, a study on the public’s perception on drug safety shows that regardless of age and educational level, patients most strongly trust the information received directly from their personal physicians. They trust information given by their doctors much more than information provided by alternative sources including pharmacists, peers, the Internet, and health-related media.³⁰ If there exists this high level of faith toward physicians by the Korean public, why do so many doctors neglect to assume the responsibility of educating patients on antibiotics and consequently deterring patients from unnecessarily consuming antibiotics?

In Weekly DongA’s exposé on antibiotics use in Korea, infectious diseases specialist Youngkoo Song of Yonsei School of Medicine provides the following insight:

Unless the Korean healthcare system is reformed, doctors will continue to prescribe antibiotics despite their awareness on Korea’s problem with its overconsumption and misuse. Rather than dealing with a possible malpractice suit for risking the 10% chance of the infection being viral, we can save time by just prescribing antibiotics.³¹

We see this element of “time” making its appearance yet again in the doctors’ attempt to explain their antibiotics prescription behavior, but Song’s explanation suggests that the current system of Korean healthcare is also a major factor to consider.

THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF KOREAN HEALTHCARE

The entire population of South Korea today benefit from universal health coverage that includes most medical services and benefits from a relatively low co-pay. This centralized system of healthcare in South Korea also allows patients free choice of health-care providers without any form of gatekeeping—for example, a patient may visit a

specialist without a primary care consult, and the patient may choose between private clinics and large general hospitals according to their preference. Since the inception of universal population coverage in 1989, South Koreans have relished a healthcare system with a high degree of affordability and freedom. This in turn catalyzed a boom in the number of private clinics to meet increased demand.³² In 2015, there were over 28,000 private clinics operating in South Korea with particularly high density observed in urban areas.³³

This high concentration of private clinics in turn created a competitive environment for doctors where patient volume directly translates to profit, especially since the fees assessed to the patients for insurance-covered services and procedures are strictly set by the National Health Insurance Service (NHIS). Simply put, doctors do not have the financial incentive to take the time to convince the patients that antibiotics are not an effective mode of treatment. The competitive field of healthcare providers encourages and enforces short consultation times to result in higher patient volume, and therefore higher profit. In fact, according to the analysis conducted by the NHIS, the average outpatient consultation time at a general hospital in South Korea is 4.2 minutes, whereas an equivalent study in the U.S. revealed that an average consultation lasts 23 minutes.^{34,35} For a doctor to correctly assess the etiology of the infection and properly educate the patient on the dangers of antibiotics, four minutes seems far too short. In regards to this matter, Hongbin Kim of Seoul University College of Medicine shares the following insight during his interview with *Weekly DongA*: “In large healthcare settings like university hospitals, it is possible to verify if the cold is viral or bacterial through certain tests. However, private clinics do not have the ability to do so. The low cost of healthcare means doctors have to see many patients quickly, and it is very difficult for us to take the time to talk and diagnose each individual patient.”³⁶ This vicious cycle of competition among doctors and reinforcement of speed and efficiency of their interactions with patients can be interpreted as one of the crucial manifestations of the *bballi bballi* culture in the context of Korean healthcare.

In addition, because medical services are affordable with no gatekeeping, patients who demand antibiotics but are not given them are free to visit any other doctor among the plethora of doctors available in the neighborhood. If patients are already culturally primed to prefer speed and efficiency while unaware of the health risk of antibiotics, the popularity of doctors with short consultation times that freely stamp out antibiotics prescriptions would inevitably rise.

The association between the strong presence of private clinics in South Korea and high antibiotics prescription rate is supported by another statistic: the negative correlation between the size of the hospital and the rate of antibiotics prescription. Small private clinics exhibit the highest rate of antibiotics prescription, while large university hospitals exhibit the lowest.³⁷ This data comes from mandatory reports of antibiotics prescription rate submitted by every healthcare provider in the country as part of a new law regulated by Health Insurance Review and Assessment (HIRA). There may be varying factors that contribute to this phenomenon in addition to the aforementioned competition-driven system. For example, patients may feel more comfortable demanding certain medications from their personal doctors. Also, doctors in private clinics may not be as well educated on the subject of antibiotics overuse as medical specialists affiliated with large university hospitals. In fact, Chonnam National University Medical School Hospital, which reported the lowest rate of antibiotics prescription in the country, attributed their record low numbers to their recent emphasis on antibiotics education in their medical school curriculum.³⁸

Lastly, it is worth noting that doctors in Korea do not gain any direct financial gains from prescribing medication to patients. Since the major controversial reform of the South Korean healthcare system in 2000 establishing a strict division between the role of a doctor and a pharmacist, doctors can no longer sell and dispense medication. This means that private clinics may no longer sell the drugs that their own doctors prescribed; only pharmacists independent from the doctor's clinic may do so. This law was drafted partly to combat overprescription rates; however, this

new restriction has yielded only a slight decrease in the antibiotics prescription rate since its inception.³⁹ This suggests that financial incentives from pharmaceutical companies is a negligible influence on doctors' prescription behavior, although a few news reports suggest that illegal corporate drug promotion from pharmaceutical companies is still a problem in the Korean healthcare industry.⁴⁰

Given all this information present so far regarding the Korean healthcare system, it is not immediately obvious why doctors, who are supposedly pressured to increase patient traffic often at the cost of maintaining the quality of care and ethics of medicine, are generously prescribing antibiotics when it would be in their best interest to have the patients visit the clinic more frequently. The answer to this question appears harmless at first glance, but is actually quite alarming upon closer inspection. According to Hyeonjeong Yoo and colleagues, Korean doctors on average prescribe antibiotics in shorter regimens, usually for 2-3 days, than other countries whose doctors would normally provide a full prescription so additional visits would not be necessary.⁴¹ Korean doctors do so, not out of malicious intent to keep patients from fully recovering, but because the ease and affordability of doctor visits allow for the possibility of frequent consultations and therefore more intimate and careful monitoring of recovery process. Frequent visits also naturally translates to higher monetary gain for doctors. The concerning element of this system is that many patients often neglect to visit the doctor again once they see visible progress in their condition after completing their short antibiotics regimen, and many discontinue the regimen at will. Stopping the treatment early by not completing the appropriate course is highly dangerous as there is significant risk that all the bacterial pathogens have not been killed, allowing for mutation into antibiotic-resistant strains.⁴²

CONCLUSION

The core essence of *bballi bballi* was a recurring theme in this analysis of antibiotics overprescription in Korea. For many Koreans, time seems to be a resource that is perpetually in shortage, giving birth to a society driven

by the pressure of having to get things done fast. From this synthesis of various data, it is evident that this high-pressure pace has fascinating manifestations in the Korean healthcare sector.

My analysis suggests that the overall structure and economic framework of Korean healthcare system and the nationally pervasive culture of *bballi bballi* influence and reinforce each other, essentially resulting in a situation which creates the undesirable byproduct of antibiotics overconsumption. The hyper-competitive society of Korea pressures individuals to invest long work hours to their occupation and pressures those who become sick to overcome their illness in a short time. Patients are misinformed and under-educated about the science of antibiotics with meager educational efforts from the government, while doctors are financially disincentivized from investing the time in patient education.

It is unfortunate that there exists no single, simple solution that could effectively halt the unnecessary consumption of antibiotics in South Korea, especially when the deeply entrenched mindset of *bballi bballi* works as a significant force that contributes to the perpetuation of this unfortunate phenomenon. While it is impractical and irresponsible to expect doctors to alter their prescription patterns and patients to immediately become more informed, certain legislative steps can be made to engender a healthier environment for both patients and doctors.

The public health sector of the South Korean government must strengthen their educational program on antibiotics use for the general public, including adolescents, and utilize peer nations' successful campaigns as a model. A financial incentive is necessary for private clinics reporting decreased rates of antibiotics prescription, while a more robust procedure for auditing should be enacted for those with consistently high rates. The privatization of health care, which currently faces strong opposition and criticism from the public, may also be effective in discouraging patients from nonessential visits and alleviating the nationwide antibiotics consumption rate.

Last but not least, the prospect of Korean culture with regard to *bballi bballi* warrants a much broader discourse.

Currently, *bballi bballi* is largely acknowledged as a simple cultural attitude among Koreans, and very few sociologists today specialize in the study of this phenomenon. We see from our analysis that *bballi bballi* is profound in its cultural and social influences, affecting Korean people in both tangibly beneficial and toxic ways. Further scholarly investigation of *bballi bballi* is needed in order to address its unhealthy symptoms in modern Korean society.

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Justin wrote this manuscript in Fall 2016 for ASIA 495: Asian Studies Research Seminar. After conducting research on the cultural implications of MV Sewol tragedy during his sophomore year, he became more interested in the concept of speed of life and its manifestations in Korea. To further investigate the topic, he was awarded the Parish Fellowship to travel to Korea (and China & Japan) during summer of 2016. It was during this trip when he learned about the antibiotics overconsumption issue, when he was given a large dose of antibiotics for his sore throat without any bacterial testing. After graduation, he hopes become a physician and utilize this knowledge in better serving the Asian American communities. He would like to thank Dr. Sonia Ryang for her generous assistance with the paper, and Dr. Juyoung Jang for catalyzing his passion for modern Korean studies.

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ASIAN STUDIES & POLITICAL SCIENCE

Aidan's primary academic interests are comparative politics and Korean studies. She hopes to work for the federal government after graduation and eventually go to graduate school for international policy.

**DIR. OF PUBLICATIONS****JUSTIN PARK**

SENIOR, MCMURTRY COLLEGE
ASIAN STUDIES & BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Justin's academic interests are primarily focused on modern Korean studies, particularly in regards to how unique aspects of Korean culture are manifested in the nation's healthcare system. He hopes to become a physician to serve Asian American communities.

**EDITOR & WEB MANAGER****AVERY JORDAN**

SOPHOMORE, WIESS COLLEGE
ASIAN STUDIES & COMPUTER SCIENCE

Avery is interested in learning about bridges between American and Chinese cultures. He anticipates Chinese technology companies becoming even more globally relevant and foresees computer science and Asian Studies being a critical juncture in his future career.

**EDITOR****JULIANN BI**

SOPHOMORE, HANSZEN COLLEGE
ECONOMICS & HISTORY

Juliann is interested in law and economics and potentially consulting. Within the history major, she plans on focusing on East Asia and the Middle East. In her free time, she enjoys reading, creative writing, playing the guitar, and restaurant hopping with friends.

**EDITOR****TAYLOR GINTER**

JUNIOR, WIESS COLLEGE
ASIAN STUDIES, MATH MINOR

Taylor is interested in exploring other cultures through texts and travel (she has been to 12 countries) and is currently learning Mandarin. In her free time, she enjoys shooting film photography, playing tuba, and petting dogs.

**EDITOR****AARON HUANG**

JUNIOR, BAKER COLLEGE
ASIAN STUDIES, ECONOMICS &
POLICY STUDIES

Aaron is an aspiring Foreign Service Officer who is interested in East Asia and human rights. The only thing stronger than his desire to pursue a career in diplomacy and Chinese politics is his passion for boba and sushi.

**EDITOR****CONNIE YICHEN ZHANG**

SENIOR, BAKER COLLEGE
ASIAN STUDIES & CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

Connie describes herself as a STEM girl who just can't give up her love for Asian Studies including literature, culture, history, film, drama, arts, and food.

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