

CANTONESE NETWORKS IN EAST ASIA AND THE CHINESE FIRM TONGSHUNTAI IN KOREA*

PREFACE

Historical research that rejects nationalistic and centralized narratives has drawn considerable attention in the globalized 21st century, and in this context research related to overseas Chinese has become popular. According to recent research, overseas Chinese were not passively incorporated into the system of free trade dominated by European and American capital, but were active in adapting to the modern environment—now even considered to be central actors in the further development of traditional Asian networks. While on the one hand comprehensive studies developed by scholars such as Furuta Kazuko 古田和子, Kogotani Naoto 籠谷直人, and Hamashita Takeshi 濱下武志 are already well-known to the academic community, empirical research on individual countries or trade ports and their relationships to the trade networks of overseas Chinese merchants has also seen great development.¹ Following the appearance of the excellent studies on overseas Chinese in Korea during the Open Port period, there has been great advance in empirical case studies on a Chinese merchant in Korea, which is comparable to those on the Taiyi 泰益 Firm, a Fujianese merchants in Japan. The subject of those studies is the Tongshuntai 同順泰 Firm, with their focus not

only on its branch stores opened in Korean cities such as Hanseong 漢城 (today's Seoul; Kyeongseong/Keijō 京城 during the colonial period), Incheon 仁川, and Jeonju 全州, but also on the trade it conducted with Japanese and Chinese trading ports.²

The Tongshuntai is a representative of overseas Chinese companies active in Korea from the 1880s through to the 1930s, and it is famous in modern Korean history, because the Qing dynasty used this firm's name to grant loans to the Korean government. In recent years, a few researches exclusively focusing on the Tongshuntai Firm have been published, not only because it was a foremost representative of Chinese companies in Korea in terms of capital and its influence, but also because the Kyujanggak 奎章閣 Archives of Seoul National University preserves a large amount of the Tongshuntai's invoices, receipts for transactions, and other related documents. These materials include "Jinkou gehuo cangkou dan" 進口各貨艙口單 (8 volumes, 1891, 1895–1900, 1903, 奎 27581), "Jiawunian gebu laihuo zhibendan" 甲午年各埠來貨置本單 (2 volumes, 1894–1895, 奎 27581), "Yiwei laihuo zhiben" 乙未來貨置本 (1 volume, 1895, 奎 27583), and "Tongtai laixin" 同泰來信 (19 volumes, 1889, 1894, 1903, 1905, 奎 27584), 4 books, 30 volumes in total. Among these documents "Jinkou gehuo cangkou dan," "Jiawunian gebu laihuo zhibendan," and "Yiwei laihuo zhiben" are books compiling invoices and receipts in transaction sent by the Tongshuntai's branches in Korea and overseas partners to the Tongshuntai's head office in Hanseong, while the most voluminous collection, "Tongtai laixin," are the compilation of letters to the Tongshuntai's manager Tan Jiasheng 譚傑生 sent by domestic branches and overseas partners.³

In fact, if one would try to grasp the whole picture of the East Asian trade, centering on Incheon and managed by Chinese merchants in Korea in the 19th and 20th centuries, he/she would find it difficult to achieve an objective only with relying on the Kyujanggak Archives and newspaper articles. In 2005, I found unexpectedly other voluminous collections of the Tongshuntai Firm in the Rare Books & Archival Collections (Gomunheon Jaryosil 古文獻資料室) of the Seoul National University library. These newly discovered materials included "Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu" 同順泰往復文書 collections of business letters (35 volumes, 1890–1899); and "Tongshuntai baohaoji" 同順泰寶號記 (in 1 volume), a compilation of invoices in transaction of 1907, 2 books, 36 volumes in total, on which I published a paper to introduce these materials to the academic community. In my latest investigation, moreover, I have found additionally an unknown document of the Tongshuntai Firm, titled "Lunchuan gongsi gupiao" 輪船公司股票 (in 1 volume, 1893); I

was also able to analyze the bookkeeping records of the Keijō Imperial University library to make it clear how the Keijō University acquired those documents and why those were divided and stored in the two different institutes. According to these bookkeeping records, the Keijō Imperial University library bought most of these collections from a Korean bookdealer named Park Bongsu 朴鳳秀 between the years 1933 and 1934—largely overlapped with the time of Tan Jiesheng’s death in 1929 and the domestic dispute, which arose in 1931 over the rightful legal heir of the Firm and left the Tan family in decline. The last purchase of “Tongshuntai baohaoji” was in July 1937 from a bookdealer named Lee Seong’ui 李聖儀, and two months later the entire Tan family ended its half-century life in Korea and returned to Shanghai. These Tongshuntai documents collected by the Keijō Imperial University library, moreover, were originally stored all together in the Rare Books & Archival Collections in the Central Library of Seoul National University. On March 6th, 1992, two documents among these records, “Tongshuntai huowu mulu” 同順泰貨物目錄 and “Tongshuntai shoushuhan” 同順泰受書翰, were transferred to the Kyujanggak Archives with corresponding changes to the registration of the titles and classifications.

Kirk Wayne Larsen in his study of overseas Chinese merchants during the Open Port period of Korea was the first to partially cite the collection of the Tongshuntai materials stored in the Kyujanggak Archives [Larsen 2000: 246–247], while the first to systematically introduce these materials was Ishikawa Ryōta 石川亮太 [Ishikawa 2004a]. Previous studies have focused mostly on the end of the 19th century, and especially on an analysis of the composition of trade in the year 1894; yet, they have only barely touched upon the history and development of the Tongshuntai.⁴ In 2004, I published an article on the Tongshuntai, which examined the development and limitations of overseas Chinese capital in Korea, by focusing on the transnational flow of capital in Asia and accompanying problems, primarily through tracing the overall business performances until 1930s as well as the rise and fall of the Tongshuntai by using newspaper materials. Yet, with the focal point of that article’s argument on the capital of overseas Chinese merchants and the interaction they had with the local nationalist sentiment, that paper still did not directly examine the invoice records and did not conclusively establish the distinction among their joint households, partners, and branches [Kang 2004].

In this paper I will focus on “Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu” and the 1907 “Tongshuntai baohaoji” of the Rare Books & Archival Collections of Seoul National University to fill in the gaps of the research findings

Table 1 Purchase Date and Present Circumstances of the Tongshuntai Collection at Seoul National University

Purchase Date	Book-dealer	Commercial Designation	Number of volumes	Price	Registered Title (by the Library)	Number of volumes	Location
December 20th, 1933	Park Bongsu 朴鳳秀	Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu	1 vol.	10 Yen	Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu	35 vols.	SNU, Rare Books & Archival Collections
December 22nd, 1933	Park Bongsu	Tongshuntai wenshu	4 vols.	40 Yen			
December 22nd, 1933	Park Bongsu	Tongshuntai wenshu (Delivery Correspondence)	30 vols.	100 Yen			
August 1934	Park Bongsu	Tongshuntai huowu mulu	11 vols.	26 Yen	Jinkou ge huocang koudan	8 vols.	Kyujanggak Archives
					Jiawunian gebu laihuo zhibendan	2 vols.	
					Yiwei laihuo zhiben	1 vol.	
		Lunchuan gongsi gupiao	1 vol.	6 Yen	Lunchuan gongsi gupiao	1 vol.	SNU, Rare Books & Archival Collections
August 13th, 1934	Park Bongsu	Tongshuntai shoushuhuan	19 vols.	30 Yen	Tongshuntai laixin	19 vols.	Kyujanggak Archives
July 8th, 1937	Lee Seong'ui 李聖儀	Tongshuntai baohaoji	1 vol.	3 Yen		1 vol.	SNU, Rare Books & Archival Collections
A Total of 67 volumes in 7 Collections							

Ishikawa has drawn from the materials in the Kyujanggak Archives. My aim will be to advance an understanding of the reality and characteristics of the international trade network the Tongshuntai Chinese merchants ran in Korea, with its focus on Incheon.

1. THE CANTON-NETWORK AS REFLECTED IN THE TONGSHUNTAI DOCUMENTS

1) Human Actors and Their Kinship in the Tongshuntai Documents

At first, by consulting Ishikawa's findings from "Tongtai laixin" and adding to it information from the newly discovered "Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu," I have identified all the senders and recipients of these letters, outlining the structure of the Tongshuntai trading network. Tables 2 and 3 below show these actors.

In terms of Chinese generation names (*paihang* 排行) which designate seniority, and what can be known of marital family affinity in these letters, it can first be confirmed that those having the Tan surname were most numerous in the relatives of the Tan family working for the Tongshuntai. It can also be found that among Tan Jiesheng's siblings are Tan Qinghu 譚晴湖 (who called Tan Jiesheng "third younger brother" (*sandi* 三弟)) and Tan Yizhuang 譚以庄 (who called Tan Jiesheng "third older brother" (*sange* 三哥)). This name "Yi" 以 was given to all siblings of the same generation according to the Chinese tradition of generational naming to designate seniority. Tan Jiesheng used the name Tan Yishi 譚以時 when he wrote to officials in a bureaucratic style, so I think this is his original family name. Tan Yizhuang should be then, for this same reason, be a younger brother of Tan Jiesheng.⁵ The next actors to appear, Tan Xiuzhi 譚秀枝 and (Tan) Qunzhi 譚群枝, seem to be not siblings of Tan Jiesheng but relatives of the similar age. Tan Xiuzhi addressed Tan Jiesheng as his distant cousin (*zongxiong* 宗兄), and because Tan Xiuzhi shares the character "Zhi" of his name with (Tan) Qunzhi it can be inferred that Qunzhi was of the Tan family even though this cannot be absolutely confirmed. Furthermore, there are those who addressed Tan Jiesheng as their uncle, such as Tan Tingrui 譚廷銳, Tan Tinggeng 譚廷賡, Tan Tingzhang 譚廷彰, (Tan) Tinghu 譚廷瑚, and Tan Xiangqiao 譚象喬. These figures, except for Tan Xiangqiao, all have the character "Ting" 廷 in their names. This suggests that the character "Ting" was used as the generation name for those who came after the generation of Tan Jiesheng. Tan Tinghu can likewise be inferred to be of the Tan

Table 2 Letter Senders in Korea and Their Regional Distribution in “Tongtai Laixin”

Shop	Actors
Tongshuntai Incheon 仁川 Branch	He Litang 何麗堂, Tan Tinggeng 譚廷慶, Tan Tingzhang 譚廷彰, Tan Qinghu 譚晴湖, Li Quanxiang 李泉享, Li Yiqing 李益卿, He Jiemei 何介眉, Li Ruiyun 李瑞雲, Tan Tingrui 譚廷銳
Tongshuntai Jeonju 全州 Branch	He Tingsheng 何挺生, Liu Shigao 劉時高, Luo Mingjie 羅明階, [Tan?] Qunzhi [譚?] 群枝, [?] Changkai [?] 常楷
Tongshuntai Gumsan 群山 Branch	Li Jingbo 李靜波
Tongshuntai Hanseong 漢城 Branch	李泉享, Shao Lanpu 邵蘭圃, Tan Xiangqiao 譚象喬
Incheon Yisheng 義生	Chen Rusan 陳如三
Incheon Yishengcheng 義生盛	Zhou Menglong 周夢龍, Zhou Ziqi 周子齊
Incheon Tongyilou 同意樓	Unknown
Wonsan Tongfengtai 同豐泰	Luo Yaozhen 羅耀箴, Luo Yufu 羅煜甫
Qing Consulate in Korea	Li Zixiang 黎子祥 (Consul at Wonsan), Tang Entong 唐恩桐 (Consul at Jinnambo 鎮南浦), Qian Mingxun 錢明訓 (Consul-General at Hanseong)
(Unknown) Juchangtai 巨昌泰	Huang Taifen 黃泰芬
Other senders of letters	Gu Dating 古達庭, Li Weichu 李偉初, Tan Xiuzhi 譚秀枝 (These three are the names which appear in the letters from Jinnambo) Tan Yizhuang 譚以庄, Zhou Yi 周義, He Zhonghou 何仲候, Zhou Qilan 周祺蘭, Liang Zhangzhao 梁振昭, Qian Ruifu 錢瑞甫, Huang Taifeng 黃泰芬, Liao ?tang 梁?堂, [Tan] Tinghu [譚]廷瑚, [?] Deqian [?] 德謙, Mi Guoquan 米郭泉, He Jinyuan 何錦垣, [?] Yongxiang [?] 永祥, Chen Qisi 陳祺思

Source: [Ishikawa 2004a: 178–193], “Dótai Raishin” shoshu shokan ichiran 「回泰來信」所收書簡一覽 (Table of persons and letters from Tongtai laixin).

* [?]: Supplemented surnames not in the original; ?: Illegible characters; (): My commentary

* Among the letters sent by Tan Jiasheng, in addition to the above recipients there is also [Tan] Qi [譚]期.

Table 3 Letter Senders in China and Japan, and Their Regional Distribution in “Tongtai Laixin” and “Tongshuntai Wangfu Wenshu”

“Tongtailaixin” Senders		“Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu” Senders		“Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu” Recipients	
Shop (Senders)	No. of Letters	Shop (Senders)	No. of Letters	Shop (Recipients)	No. of Letters
Shanghai Tongtai 同泰 (Liang Lunqing, Luo Zhuchen 羅柱臣)	32	The same (Liang Lunqing, Luo Zhuchen)	37	The same (Liang Lunqing, Luo Zhuchen)	43
Hong Kong Anhetai 安和泰 (Luo Ziming 羅子明)	7	The same (Luo Xunqing 羅遜卿)	6	The same (Luo Xunqing, [?] Zaichen [?] 載臣)	20
Kobe Xianglong 祥隆 (Chen Dasheng 陳達生)	10	The same (Chen Dasheng)	32	The same (Chen Dasheng)	36
Yokohama Fuhe 福和 (Tan Yujie 譚玉階, Yan Peilin 譚沛霖)	5	The same (Tan Yujie, Tan Peilin)	14	The same (Tan Peilin, Tan Yujie)*	21
Nagasaki Wanchanghe 万昌和 (Pan Dachu 潘達初)	2	The same (Pan Dachu)	3	The same (Pan Dachu, [?] Zesheng [?] 澤生)	3
				Guangzhou Yong'antai 永安泰 ([?] Yutian [?] 煜田)	5

Source: Items related to “Tongtai laixin” have the same source as Table 2, those from “Tongtai wangfu wenshu” I have arranged myself.

* Among the 39 letters sent by Tan Jiesheng in “Tongtai laixin,” none of the letters are sent outside Korea.

* Tan Peilin returned to his hometown in Guangdong province on November 20th, 1894, and sometime between February and March 1895 he returned to Yokohama. During his absence business matters of the Fuhe Firm were the responsibility of his uncle Yujie, and it can be known that the relationship between the two men was that of uncle and nephew (Letter from Tan Peilin to Tan Jiesheng dated November 19th, 1894, “Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu,” vol. 10-7).

family by having the same generation name. Additionally, the memoir of Tan Jiesheng's ninth son Tan Tingze 譚廷澤 records that Tan Jiesheng's eldest son was named Tan Tinghu, so the Tan Tinghu who appears in these Tongshuntai letters is probably Tan Jiesheng's eldest son. In addition, he addressed Tan Jiesheng as "honorable father" (*zunqin daren* 尊親大人) and called himself "humble son" (*buxiao* 不肖).⁶ Even though Tan Xiangqiao does not have the character "Ting" in his name, judging from his referring to Tan Jiesheng as "third uncle," it is apparent he is also of the generation that came after Tan Jiesheng. It is Tan Xiangqiao that managed the affairs of the Hanseong head office in place of Tan Jiesheng whenever the latter was away, and who sent letters to the absent Tan Jiesheng to report these affairs. Tan Jiesheng's name is Yishi, and the name Jiesheng by which he was ordinarily addressed is his style name (*zi* 字). Tan Qinghu's name Qinghu is also perhaps his style name with his original name being Yirui 以瑞, and by this reasoning it may as well be said that Tan Xiangqiao also has an original name with the character "Ting" and his name Xiangqiao is his style name.

Not only the Tan family worked within the Tongshuntai, there were also others among whom those of the Li 李 or He 何 families were most numerous. Of the Li family there are Li Quanxiang 李泉享, Li Yiqing 李益卿, Li Ruiyun 李瑞雲, and Li Jingbo 李靜波; and of the He family are He Tingsheng 何挺生, He Jiemei 何介眉, and He Litang 何麗堂. If we add those whose family affiliation is not expressly recorded—counting also Li Weichu 李偉初, He Zhongho 何仲候, He Jinyuan 何錦垣—there are five Tongshuntai employees from both the Li and He families. Documentation proves that He Tingsheng and He Jiemei were both related in marriage to the Tan family. As for the relationship of these others to the Tan family or among themselves, more research is needed. According to the Chinese business customs, Chinese people from any province doing business abroad would employ for their shops not locals but their relatives called from their hometown or those from the same native place. A typical example of this process can be seen when Tan Jiesheng left his hometown, Gaoyao 高要 county, Guangdong, for Shanghai to work as an employee of the Tongtai 同泰 Firm, the business of his elder sister's husband Liang Lunqing 梁綸卿. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable for us to assume that these employees of the He family are somehow relatives of Tan Jiesheng's second wife Ms. He; Tan Jiesheng married Ms. He in his hometown.⁷ As his first wife Liang Rongfang 梁容芳 was all along in his hometown managing his family property, it was Ms. He who lived with Tan Jiesheng in Hanseong from beginning to end. Including his second-born son Tan Tingkun 譚廷琨 and his third-born son

Tan Tinglin 譚廷琳, she had three sons and one daughter. While Tan Jiasheng was doing business in Korea in his position as the Tongshuntai Firm's manager, it was Ms. He, in fact, who managed the household [Tan 1973: 6].

2) Cantonese Native-Place Relationships and Trading Networks

In the trade activities and organization of Cantonese merchants' network, native-place identities and hometown bonds were of importance similar to familial relationships. He Litang, who worked at the Tongshuntai's Incheon branch, was from Gaoyao county; and although it is unclear to which family Zhou Qilan 周祺蘭 belonged, he was from Kaiping 開平 county, Guangdong. There are several accounts of the employment process in "Tongtai laixin," as in an 1894 letter Tan Tinggeng of the Incheon branch writes to Tan Jiasheng that although he wished to employ (Tan) Tingbin [譚]廷賓 to work at the Incheon branch it was not approved by the Incheon branch manager Tan Qinghu. For this reason, he made a special request to Tan Jiasheng of the Hansong office to hire this person, writing, "If you can now use our brother, I would be so grateful."⁸ Another example is when a Tongshuntai employee Cai Binghe 蔡炳蘇 turned to Tan Jiasheng to ask if he could employ He Chaoqun's 何超群 son-in-law, Mr. Fu 福哥, who wanted to work at an overseas trading port.⁹ These examples show the overlap which existed between hometown and familial relationships.

The above feature also appears in the materials related to partner company shops and trade partners. Lists of customers show that most of them were, like Tan Jiasheng, born in Guangdong province, with the majority born along the Pearl River Delta in the Guangzhou 廣州 and Zhaoqing 肇慶 region. Being both the largest shareholder and Tan Jiasheng's brother-in-law, Liang Lunqing of the Shanghai Tongtai Firm, was inter-related with Tang Jiasheng in native-place bonds as well as in familial relations. The case of Liang will be discussed later in detail. As to domestic trade partners and overseas partners, they unexceptionally were made up of Cantonese people, especially from Guangzhou prefecture. Among others, Zhou Menglong 周夢龍 of the Yishengcheng 義生盛 in Incheon was from Kaiping County, Chen Rusan 陳如三 of the Incheon Yisheng 怡生 Firm from Xiangshan 香山 County, and Luo Yaozhen 羅耀箴 of the Tongfengtai 同豐泰 in Wonsan 元山 from Heshan 鶴山 County, all of them in Guangdong. An analysis of the Tongshuntai's overseas trade partners can reveal the network of native-place relations concealed in this trade network even more clearly. Ishikawa has figured out that

Pan Dachu 潘達初, the manager of the Nagasaki Wanchanghe 萬昌和, was born in Nanhai 南海 County, Guangdong, and was a member of the Hefutang 合福堂 (Hall of Joint Happiness) association of Cantonese merchants in Nagasaki. According to Gong Baihong's 龔伯洪 book, Pan Dachu's Wanchanghe was one of the eight largest Cantonese merchants in Nagasaki; and from this we can know that it must have been a large-scale company [Gong 2003: 241]. Although we still cannot confirm where Tan Yujie 譚玉階 of the Yokohama Hefu 福和 Firm was born, his and Tan Jiesheng's mutual calling as "distant cousins" hints that they belong to the same lineage.¹⁰ Chen Dasheng 陳達生 of the Xianglong 祥隆 Firm in Kobe was born in Shunde 順德 County, Guangdong, and he used to be one of the executive members of the Cantonese association in Kobe as a highly powerful merchant.¹¹

With the opening of Japan, Western companies' advance into Japan helped Cantonese merchants enter Japanese treaty ports as well. Since the British colonization of Hong Kong, Western companies set up their main offices in Hong Kong, Macao, and Guangzhou, and later expanded their businesses by opening branches in Japan. For getting new branches started in Japan, these Western managers took some of their Cantonese compradors and employees with them; and later some of these Cantonese merchants stayed in Japan and opened their own stores. After the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese Friendship and Trade Treaty (Zhong-Ri Xiuhao Tiaogui 中日修好條規) between the Qing dynasty and Japan in 1871, the number of Chinese that went to Japan increased rapidly. The trading port city Yokohama had developed rapidly after Japan opened its ports, and gradually replaced Nagasaki as the city where overseas Chinese were concentrated. In the year 1882 there were 2,172 Chinese living in Yokohama, amounting to 60% of all Chinese in Japan. Cantonese associations were successively established in Nagasaki (1872), Kobe (1876), Osaka (1896), and then Yokohama (1898). These Cantonese groups had a huge influence on the Chinese society in Japan. Even as early as in 1871, Cantonese made up most of the Chinese assembly hall members in Yokohama. Of the 457 Chinese merchants living in Kobe in the year 1873, 323 or 70% were Cantonese. No matter which of the port cities in Japan, from the middle of the 19th until the early 20th century Cantonese merchants were most numerous. According to Gong Baihong, even when these Cantonese merchants lost their majority status in the 1920s with an influx of Chinese from Taiwan and Fujian, they were always most influential [Gong 2003: 166].

What was the relationship between the Tongshuntai and its partner company shops in Japan? Even a brief glance through the letters of

“Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu” will reveal that these partner company shops in Japan not only facilitated the direct trade of commodities between Japan and Korea, but also performed a crucial service for the Tongshuntai’s East Asian trade by finalizing the settlement by remittance transfer. Money sent from the Tongshuntai Firm in Korea to the Shanghai Tongtai Firm to pay for imported goods was first remitted by the Japanese-owned Dai-Ichi Bank (Daiichi Ginkō 第一銀行) Incheon office in Korea to the Dai-Ichi Bank in Osaka. The correspondence with an attached money order was then either sent or entrusted to someone for delivery to the Xianglong Firm in Kobe, who would then take the money order back to the Dai-Ichi Bank in Osaka to withdraw money to take to the Osaka office of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC, Huifeng Yinhang 滙豐銀行), where another money order would be delivered both by telegram and mail to the Tongtai Firm’s account in HSBC Shanghai office. The money remitted from Korea to Japan would be sent in Japanese Yen, and when it was remitted from Japan to Shanghai it would be first converted into tael to be sent again.¹² Moreover, every time the Tongshuntai would compare the remittance service charges and currency exchange rates, sometimes using the Yokohama Fuhe Firm and the HSBC office in Yokohama.¹³ In addition, these partner company shops in Japan not only settled these remittances but also played an important role in the transportation of merchandise. When goods from Hong Kong or Shanghai were imported to Incheon, or Korean goods were exported to China, the partner company shops in Japan helped send this merchandise. Their role in the Tongshuntai distribution network was extremely important, as is evidenced by the fact the volume of these forwarded merchandise exceeded all direct trade between Korea and Japan. Especially in the year 1894, when Chinese and Korean trade routes were obstructed during the First Sino-Japanese War period, the intermediary role of these partner company shops in Japan took on growing importance.¹⁴ Moreover, every time partner company shops in Japan and the Tongshuntai exchanged business letters, current price of major imported and exported goods and market price of gold and silver in respective treaty ports were reported to each other for facilitating business in maximizing marginal profit.¹⁵

3) Reconstructing Cantonese Merchant Networks from “Tongshuntai Baohaoji”

In addition to the collections of business letters discussed above, the Tongshuntai documents also include documentary evidence of the trade

in the form of invoices and receipts. “Jinkou gehuo cangkou dan,” “Jiawunian gebu laihuo zhibendan,” and “Yiwei laihuo zhibe” in the Kyujanggak Archive and “Tongshuntai baohaoji” in Rare Books & Archival Collections of Seoul National University belong to this category. First, as for oversea partner company shops and trade partners who have made an appearance ever in the Tongshuntai documents of the Kyujanggak Archive, their shop names and their frequencies in appearance are as follows: the Anhetai 安和泰 Firm (44 documents), the Maohexiang 茂和祥 Firm (2 documents), and the Wanxiangtang 萬祥堂 Firm (2 documents) of Hong Kong; the Yong’antai 永安泰 Firm (6 documents) and the Ruicaotang 瑞草堂 Firm (2 documents) of Guangzhou; the Tongtai Firm (170 documents), the Laoyuezuoxingji 老悅坐興記 Firm (1 document), and the Huazhang 華彰 Firm (1 document) of Shanghai; the Faji 發記 Firm (64 documents) and the Chenhengshun 陳恒順 Firm (1 document)¹⁶ of Zhenjiang 鎮江; the Wanqingyuan 萬慶源 Firm (2 documents) and the Litaiqian 履泰謙 Firm (4 documents) of Yantai 煙台; the Wanchanghe Firm of Nagasaki (4 documents); the Xianglong Firm of Kobe (1 document); and the Fuhe Firm of Yokohama (2 documents). In total, there were 15 firms, respectively 12 shops in China and Hong Kong (3 in Hong Kong, 2 in Guangzhou, 3 in Shanghai, 2 in Zhenjiang, 2 in Yantai), and 3 shops in Japan (with one each in Nagasaki and Kobe). During the whole 8 years reported in these documents, 8 out of 12 shops appeared merely once or twice.¹⁷ Only 4 shops—the Anhetai, the Tongtai, the Faji, and the Xianglong Firms—had their transaction with the Tongshuntai last for more than three years.

First, let us examine the spatial distribution and characteristics of the Tongshuntai trade. It is easily discerned that the overwhelming majority of its trade was conducted with Hong Kong and China, even if the scope of its trade stretched to Japan. And then, the largest trade partner was the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai, followed by the Faji Firm in Zhenjiang, and the third was then the Anhetai in Hong Kong. These three trade partners accounted for 86% of the total volume of the Tongshuntai trade. As the Faji Firm was a store specialized in silk trade, its bills were all sent to Incheon after the Tongtai Firm purchased the merchandise which the Tongshuntai had requested by order forms. These original bills were then supplied to the Tongshuntai so that the price could be checked alongside the original merchandise order forms the Tongshuntai sent to the Tongtai Firm. Since the Anhetai could not make direct shipments to Incheon but Shanghai had to act as an intermediary between it and Korea, it is clear that the majority of the Tongshuntai’s trade was conducted via the Tongtai Firm.

Next, we will investigate the changes in the trading network over time. If one looks at the detailed listings in the Kyujanggak Archives for its last listed year of 1899, a trend can be discovered. In the frequency of trade, the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai (29 documents) and the Faji Firm in Zhenjiang (12 documents) are still the two foremost in 1899 as before. Yet, there are also others such as the Anhetai Firm in Hong Kong (2 documents), the Ruicaotang Firm in Guangzhou (2 documents), the Laoyuezuoxingji Firm (1 document) and the Huazhang Firm in Shanghai (1 document), and the Chenhengshun Firm in Zhenjiang (1 document), while the Japanese partner stores that had appeared in the initial period are no longer to be seen. Superseding them is the Tongshuntai's close relationship with Shanghai, which was gradually established in the beginning of the 21st century. "Tongshuntai baohaoji" records for the year 1907 further confirm this trend. Above all, there are no invoices in transaction with Japanese partners in 1907 as in 1899. "Tongshuntai baohaoji" of 1907 has 12 firms appear inside. Out of this 12, only 4 firms—the Tongtai, the Anhetai, the Ruicaotang, and the Chenhengshun Firms—have been witnessed in the earlier documents in the Kyujanggak Archives. The rest 8 firms newly found in 1907's invoices were all shops in Shanghai. Furthermore, the total yearly transaction value calculated from the invoices of 1907 demonstrates the Tongshuntai trade's even deepening reliance on Shanghai. The total yearly transaction value of their accounts is 29,414.312 taels, of which the trade conducted through the Tongtai Firm of Shanghai, either procuring goods locally or transmitting the goods of the Anhetai Firm in Hong Kong, accounts for the 99%, excluding the 98.743 taels for the goods from the Ruicaotang Firm in Guangzhou. As for the trade and the specific firms that appear in 1907, I have already analyzed in detail in another publication [Kang 2011: Chaps 1 and 4]. Here I wish only to emphasize that the East Asian trade of the Tongshuntai Firm in Korea became gradually more focused on Shanghai, and besides Shanghai the only region which still merits attention would be Hong Kong and Guangzhou, the Cantonese network's hometown.

2. THE CANTONESE NETWORK'S POLITICAL NATURE AND PRINCIPLE OF CONSTITUTION

1) Guangdong-Zhaoqing Commercial Community in Shanghai and Korea

The interpersonal network of Shanghai's Tongtai Firm

As I have said above, the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai handled most of the business of the Tongshuntai Firm in Korea. Of the correspondences I have analyzed in “Tongtai laixin” and “Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu” (Vol. 1–30), 276 of these correspondences are international and 112 or 40% are correspondences back and forth with the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai. As for trade value, the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai accounts for 86% of the total sum of trade as calculated from the Kyujanggak archival materials. Meanwhile, that share even becomes greater to 99% in “Tongshuntai baohaoji.” As the largest trade partner of the Tongshuntai Firm, and the one which undertook most of the transactions with the Tongshuntai, what kind of company was the Tongtai Firm?

Liang Lunqing (also called Liang Yingmian 梁應綿), the owner of the Tongtai Firm who appears in the Tongshuntai documents, was the typical Cantonese merchant of Shanghai. The exact date when Liang Lunqing established the Tongtai Firm is unclear, but considering that his name is on the 1875 list of British cotton cloth importers, at the very least Liang Lunqing was running the Tongtai Firm in the 1870s. As for the latest date possible, the 1918 *Shanghai shangye minglu* 上海商業名錄 [Xu 1918] classifies and introduces 46 Cantonese business, of which one is the Tongtai. In this material it is written, “Tongtai, Ningbo Road 11 (*west Jiangxi* 江西 Road) of the British Concession. Managed by Liang Yingmian.” From this source we can know that in 1918 Liang Lunqing and the Tongtai Firm were still going strong. In addition, the *Shanghai shangye minglu* compiled by Lin Xia 林霞 and published by the Commercial Press Shanghai (Shangwu Yinshuguan 商務印書館) in 1925 and its enlarged edition published in 1928 both list the Tongtai Firm under the listing of the Cantonese commercial community. They both write, “Beijing Road, Qingshunli 慶順里 U 62 of the British Concession, Managed by: Liang Lunqing, Phone #: Central 4498.” Although the address had changed, Liang Lunqing is still listed as the manager. Yet, according to the account of *Shen Bao* 申報 (Shanghai News) on October 6th, 1924, Liang Lunqing had died in September 1924 and the Cantonese Commercial Federation, of which he was the vice-president, would be holding a memorial service in his honor. I suppose it may be that the Tongtai Firm still existed after his death in 1928.¹⁸

Liang Lunqing was from Gaoyao County, Guangdong, and he was a long-time executive member of Guangdong-Zhaoqing Native-place Association (Guang-Zhao Gongsuo 廣肇公所) which brought his fellow Cantonese together. Another relevant fact worthy of our attention is that Liang Lunqing was a close friend of Zheng Guanying 鄭觀應, the chief-director of the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company (CMSNC, Lunchuan Zhaoshangju 輪船招商局), who became a famous reformist through the publication of books such as *Shengshi weiyán* 盛世危言 (Words of Warning to a Prosperous Age) and *Yiyan* 易言 (On Change) [Shanghai duiwai jingji maoyi zhi Biaozuan Weiyuanhui 2001].

Zheng Guanying, who was from Xiangshan County, Guangdong, came to Shanghai when he was 17 and began working as a low-level comprador for the British Dent & Co. (Baoshun Yanghang 寶順洋行). In 1868, at the age of 27, he began to study English at the Anglo-Chinese School (Yinghua Shuguan 英華書館) which had been set up by British missionaries. At that time, Zheng Guanying studied with Liang Lunqing together [Xia 1995: 6], and the two became lifelong friends. We can see Zheng's writings mentioning Liang's name, such as the short article titled "Reply to My Friend Liang's Preface in Reprinted *Haishanqiyou*" in his *Shengshi weiyán* or his other writings titled "The letter to My Friend, Liang Lunqing." This fact well demonstrates their intimate friendship. This can especially be seen in *Xiangshan Zheng Shenju Daihe Laoren zhushu* 香山鄭慎餘待鶴老人囑書 (The Testament of Old Man Zhen of Xiangshan Who Awaits the Crane with an Abundance of Worry), a will prepared by Zheng Guanying in 1914, where he passes on the role of his legal surrogate to his fifth younger brother Zheng Yizhi 鄭翼之, with Liang Lunqing acting as a witness. His fifth younger brother Zheng Yizhi studied English like Zheng Guanying and later became a comprador for the Tianjin office of the Butterfield & Swire Co. (Taigu Yanghang 太古洋行), where he accumulated immense wealth.¹⁹

There were many compradors in Zheng Guanying's family. His uncle Zheng Tingjiang 鄭廷江 was a Shanghai comprador of Overweg & Co. (Xinde Yanghang 新德洋行), and his relative Zeng Qipu 曾寄圃 was a comprador of the British Dent & Co. and a friend of the famous late Qing comprador Xu Run 徐潤. These figures were all from Xiangshan County.

Tang Tingshu 唐廷樞 (also known as Tang Jingxing 唐景星, 1832–92), especially important for a vital role he played in the Korean affairs, was a relative of Zheng Guanying, and the two were very intimate. Tang was also born in Xiangshan County. Tang Tingshu was once a comprador for the Jardine & Matheson Co. (Yihe Yanghang 怡和洋行), and later

gained the trust of Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 to be recruited as the first chief-director of the CMSNC. Accordingly, he was a figure who directly intervened in the opening of Korea's ports.²⁰ Li Hongzhang and the *Yangwu* 洋務 faction in the Qing court played a decisive role in the Korean government's decision to open the treaty ports and establish the customs. In other words, Li Hongzhang was a practical decision-maker in the Qing policy towards Korea from that point forward. To prevent the increasing power of Japan and Russia in Korea, the Qing government had no choice but to persuade the Korean government to conclude the treaties with Western countries and to open its ports, saying that America was an unambitious country among Western nations. At last, in the year 1882 the Korean and the American governments concluded the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation under the mediation of the Qing. When Li Hongzhang dispatched his right-hand man Ma Jianzhong 馬建忠 with the Beiyang 北洋 Fleet to Korea to deal with the matters concerning the treaty, Tang Tingshu also went to Korea on the same ship with special orders from Li Hongzhang, such as to investigate the mining situation in northern Korea and information on the Korean natural resources after the opening of the ports.

While for the first time the Qing sent a resident diplomatic agent to Korea, the Qing government required Korea to open maritime customs which would operate under the Qing maritime customs. Due to Tang Tingshu's strong recommendation to Li Hongzhang, Tang's Xiangshanese fellow Chen Shutang 陳樹棠 was assigned to the first Chinese diplomatic representative in Korea. Moreover, Tang acquired the assistance of Ma Jianzhong, and had Paul Georg von Möllendorff (Mu Linde 穆麟德), the inspector general of the Korean Maritime Customs Service, recruit Tang Shaoyi 唐紹儀 (1860–1938) as a Customs staff [Okamoto 2004: 132, 427]. Chen Shutang was from Xiangshan County, and once followed Tang Tingshu to Korea because they were fellow Cantonese from Xiangshan. Tang Shaoyi was not only a fellow townsman but was also Tang Tingshu's nephew. Later he went on to become the first premier of the Republic of China, and it was during his time in Korea that he gained the trust of Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 to be appointed as the Chinese Commissioners of Trade (*shangwu weiyuan* 商務委員, equivalent of today's consul) of Yeongsan 龍山. After the First Sino-Japanese War he was appointed as the Consul General of Korea and had exerted considerable influence on the Sino-Korean relationship.

Tang Tingshu only went to Korea once, yet he offered the chances for the talented youth from Xiangshan county to carve out their careers in Korea and sowed the seed of the future Cantonese power in Korea.

Later, they were recruited by Li Hongzhang and Yuan Shikai. This made Tang Tingshu one of the key persons to carry out the Qing policy in Korea. The Qing was able to spread its economic influence in Korea not only by subordinating the newly-opened Korean Maritime Customs to the Chinese Maritime Customs but also strengthening maritime communication between China and Korea through the CMSNC. The Qing installed a regular steamship line directly from Shanghai to Incheon to support Chinese merchants' business in competition with Japanese merchants in Korea. Tang Tingshu not only established the CMSNC according to Li Hongzhang's instructions, but also assumed the position of its chief-director since 1872. In addition, before and after his trip to Korea Tang recruited none other than Zheng Guanying as the assistant-director of the CMSNC. Zheng Guanying participated in the 1873 establishment of the China Navigation Company (CNC, Taigu Lunchuan Gongsi 太古輪船公司), a new venture of the British merchant Butterfield & Swire Co., and became a chief-comprador of this newly-opened steamship company the next year. On the one hand, he also invested in and became a shareholder of the CMSNC. In the year 1883 he left the CNC and moved to the CMSNC to assume the post of assistant-director.

What is noteworthy is that the Tongtai Firm began to raise share capital in Shanghai for opening the Tongshuntai in Incheon, on the occasion of Zheng's move to the CMSNC. But Zheng Guanying was forced to leave the CMSNC in 1885, because the CNC filed a claim for compensation against him, and he even suffered temporary detainment in Hong Kong. Afterward, he retreated to Macao to endure 6 years of adversity. Even during this time, however, he took part several times in fundraising activities for Tang Tingshu. In 1893, Li Hongzhang once again appointed Zheng Guanying to the assistant-director of the CMSNC following the advice of Sheng Xunhuai 盛宣懷, Li's henchmen. Sheng had recommended Zheng to Li repeatedly since Tang Tingshu died in 1892. Coincidentally, the Tongshuntai Firm lent its name to the Chinese grant of loans to the Korean government in 1892, at the same time when Zheng was preparing his brilliant comeback to the CMSNC through negotiation. Based on the investigation of the above course of events, it is certain that Liang's close relationship with the comprador-officials from Xiangshan County and his special links with the Qing government in Korea provoked Liang's interest in opening a shop in Korea. Besides, this connection might be the reason why the Tongshuntai Firm supplied semiofficial services for the Qing government in Korea.

Liang Lunqing and Zheng Guanying became such close friends not only because they were once classmates, but even more decisively

because they both belonged to the same native-place community, the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing Native-place Association of Shanghai. Both Gaoyao and Xiangshan counties were parts of the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing region. Connected to this point is another person who merits attention, Tang Jiechen 唐杰臣 (Tang Rongjun 唐榮俊, 1862–1904) from Xiangshan County, who led the Shanghai Guangzhou-Zhaoqing commercial community (or called as Guangbang 廣幫) as the chief-executive of the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing Native-place Association of Shanghai. He was one of the executive members of the Shanghai Commercial Convention Association (Shanghai Shangye Huiyi Gongsuo 上海商業會議公所) established in 1902, the first Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai, of which Liang Lunqing was one of the 72 founding members. In addition, Tang Jiechen was the son of Tang Tingzhi 唐廷植, Tang Tingshu's eldest brother. Succeeding his uncle Tang Tingshu and his father who had replaced his brother's post, Tang Jiechen became the chief comprador of the Jardin Matheson & Co. as well. Tang Jiechen and Liang Lunqing worked together for a long time as the leaders of the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing Native-place Association. In 1899 the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing Native-place Association Hall was rebuilt, and the Association commemorated it by composing *Shanghai Guang-Zhao Huiguan Xu* 上海廣肇會館序 (Preface to the Shanghai Guangzhou-Zhaoqing Native-place Association Hall) where 11 leading figures were named, including Tang Jiecheng and Liang Lunqing.

The Shanghai Guangzhou-Zhaoqing commercial community was more powerful than the other groups in Shanghai of merchants from various localities. Up to the Republic period, the executive posts allocated for the merchants from the Guangdong Province in the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce (Shanghai Zongshanghui 上海總商會) was entirely monopolized by the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing group [Liu 2004: 203; 2006: 100]. As Tang and Liang were both the leaders of the Cantonese community in Shanghai and the central figures of the Shanghai Commercial Convention Association, it is not hard to assume that they must have had a very close relationship. Besides, Tang Jiechen might be another important key person who connected Liang Lunqing and Tan Jiesheng with the Qing officials of Xiangshan origin in Korea. It should be worthy to note that Tang Jiechen might have a special relationship with Tang Shaoyi, who served in the Korean Maritime Customs initially and later worked for Yuan Shikai in the Chinese diplomatic mission in Hanseong. These two Tangs were the same family members and furthermore both studied in the US as recipients of the Chinese government's first study-abroad scholarship program. The proposer and person in charge for this

“Chinese Educational Mission” (Liumei Youtong 留美幼童) program was Rong Hong 容闳, who was also a Cantonese Xiangshan native, and the program from the years 1872 to 1875 annually chose 30 young students as an undertaking of the national policy. The fourth group of these students included many children of the Qing officials and wealthy Cantonese merchant families. Tang Jiechen was among this fourth group sent to America in 1875, while Tang Shaoyi being a year older than him was sent to study in America with the third group in 1874. Zhou Shouchen 周壽臣 (1861–1959), who later was assigned to the Korean Maritime Customs together with Tang Shaoyi, was also among the Cantonese of this third group. He and Tang Shaoyi were classmates at Columbia University, and both first worked in Tianjin before being transferred to Korea.²¹ He is said to have become the Chinese Commissioner of Trade in Incheon in 1894. Through the Chinese Educational Mission program, a total of 120 young men were sent to study in the US, of which 84 were Cantonese and 40 were from Xiangshan County.²²

Considering the unique relationship between Liang Lunqing and the comprador-officers group from Xiangshan County, I will reexamine the significance of the 1892 Tongshuntai loans. Even though the Tongshuntai was the most powerful company in the Chinese business society at that time, one can still raise a question: why could a private company take part in such significant diplomatic event? The same question can be also raised in the case of “official” smuggling pointed out by the scholar of modern Korean history Kim Jeonggi 金正起, who argued the Tongshuntai Firm actively colluded with Yuan Shikai to smuggle red ginseng on Qing naval ships at great profit [Kim J. 1976:434]. We can find some clues of answers for these questions by considering the humane relationship built across Liang Lunqing, the merchant-official elite from Xiangshan county, Tang Shaoyi, and Yuan Shikai.

Qing activities in Korea and the Tongshuntai Firm

The evidences of unusual connection between the Tongshuntai Firm and the Qing officials in Korea are scattered throughout “Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu.” In December 1893, Tan Jiasheng, on the order from General Yuan (Yuan Shikai), mediated a transaction of a small steamboat purchase on the behalf of Korean official Wang Cho’an 王初安 (appearing as Hwang Cho’an 黃初安 in vol. 11-10) and the Kobe shipyard. He inquired about the price of building the boat through his trader partner shop, the Xianglong Firm in Kobe, and concluded a deal on condition that the Kobe shipyard would build the ship by the end of April for 12,000 yuan and the Korean side would pay 14,000 yuan with the ship

delivered to Incheon. In this process, the head office of the Tongshuntai in Hanseong should make an advance payment of 900 yuan instead. Although Tan Jiesheng had sent a letter to Liang Lunqing in Shanghai explaining that he did not want to spend so much money, he had no choice but to pay the money since it was truly difficult to contact the officialdom and he had to take into consideration the possibility of a damaged reputation otherwise. He also unenthusiastically said that even though he was unsure if he would see any benefit from this opportunity, it left that possibility open. However, to our interest, just in the same letter he also made a report to Liang about his successful sale of the steamer Hanyang (Hanyang-hao 漢陽號) at the price of 30,000 yuan. The Tongshuntai Firm had set up a steamship company named Tonghui Steamship Company (Tonghui Kongsi 通惠公司) to open a regular line on the Han River as a Sino-Korean joint venture with the support of the Qing government. But as Tan decided to get out of this business because of huge deficit, Tan sold out its steamer to the Bureau of Transportation of the Korean government (Jeon'unsa 轉運司). According to the research of Na Aeja 羅愛子, the Tongshuntai Firm's original purchase price of the steamer Hanyang was 25,000 yuan [Na 1998: 132–133]. Meanwhile, W. H. Wilkinson, the acting British Consul General at that time reported its price as 20,000 yuan. According to his report, this ship was heavily damaged owing to successive collisions shortly after it was put into operation, and the company itself suffered from deficit owing to that damage and the decline in business. Taking account of these remarks, the sale price of 30,000 yuan to the Korean government is quite high, even 50% higher than the original purchase price. In his letter, Tan also added that “Selling this ship off is incredibly lucky and it's a weight off my shoulders.” In spite of his complaint about his loss in taking a role of an official agency, his back-scratching alliance and close relationship with the Qing government surely granted considerable advantage in his own business.²³

From this kind of cooperation with the Qing officials, the Tongshuntai also seems to get access to the Korean royal family. Also in the 12th month of 1893, the Korean official An Hakju 安學柱 visited Tan Jiesheng in the Hanseong head office and asked if Tan could lend 30,000 silver taels to the King Gojong 高宗, who urgently needed the sum, at 2.2% interest by the end of year. In return, An proposed that 5,000 catties of red ginseng could be given to Tan for consignment sales in Shanghai and Hong Kong. At that time the Hanseong office held fund merely amounting to 10,000 taels, and a year-end season was usually the time when all Chinese firms had reserves running out due to the settlement

of account. Therefore, Tan Jiasheng asked Liang Lunqing in Shanghai about the possibility of funding as well as the prospect of this transaction.²⁴ Liang Lunqing's letter of reply has too many illegible characters to find out his answer. Yet, the deal doesn't seem to have been made, because this event was not mentioned any more in later letters and the Hanseong office was also on a tight budget owing to sending large sum of money to Shanghai at the end of the year to close its accounts. Through this case, we can make two things clear at least: first, the Tongshuntai Firm had a strong political network extending to the Korean Court; second, it still followed the Tongtai Firm's instructions from Shanghai.

The political nature of the Tongshuntai Firm is even more obvious during the turbulence of the First Sino-Japanese War. In June 1894 Japan sent troops to occupy Incheon, and the Qing army still had not decided whether to move troops to Hanseong. Tan Jiasheng often raised political issues in his letters to Liang Lunqing to actively voice his opinion. For example, in a letter to Liang Lunqing, he attached a copy of a memorial addressed to the Korean throne by Otori Keisuke 大鳥圭介, Japanese Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Korea, and then summarized the gist of it as follows. "This memorial's point is for Japan to support Korea to stand on her own independence (*zizhu* 自主), in such a way to betray China and to relate with Japan like lips and teeth. In advance, Japan asked Korea to reform institutions, and dispatched (Japanese) military officers to train (Korean) soldiers, by which to make Korea rich and build up her military power." Then, he said that "The Korean king is so coward and irresolute." In Tan's view, the reason why the King Gojong hesitated to answer to the Japanese request is only that he was afraid of being blamed for it by the Qing government after the arrival of Chinese troops. Interestingly, he explained that he would give the manuscript of this memorial to Yuan Shikai for reporting to Li Hongzhang by telegraph. Not only using the connection with the Qing officials in Hanseong, Tan Jiasheng also collected information from the Japanese legation and Western consuls in Hanseong and Incheon. This was to prepare for contingencies and most importantly to protect his capital. He transferred silk products worth of 25,000 silver dollars (*yuan*) stocked in Hanseong to a warehouse located in the Chinese Concession of Incheon. Besides, linen products worth of 6,000 *yuan* were moved to the warehouse of the Maritime Services by aid of a person named He Jinyuan. He confidently reported to Liang in Shanghai that Western garrisons could protect his products even in the worst of situations.²⁵

In spite of the limited usage of scattered materials, it is still unques-

tionable that Cantonese merchants had considerable political and economic leverage in Korea during the initial stage of the Opening Port period. Moreover, the sphere of the Tongshuntai Firm's business activities went beyond Korea and included other main trading ports in East Asia, such as Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Kobe, etc. From the Opium War and the start of the treaty port system in East Asia onward, Cantonese merchants in collaboration with Western companies had made inroads in most of the main ports in East Asia, and rapidly developed to form one of the most powerful commercial groups in the East Asian trade. The Tongshuntai's example could be seen as one of the episodes in this grand course of events.

The Chinese term of the "Cantonese merchant groups in Shanghai" (*lu Hu Guangbang* 旅滬廣幫) illustrate well their strong presence. As Lin Hui Feng 林輝鋒 points out, this term refers to a loose community made up mostly of merchants from the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing region, who lived in Shanghai during the specific period, that is, from the late Qing up to the earlier Republic period. Guangzhou-Zhaoqing Native-place Association was the core organization of this community. In the year 1853, there were already over 80 thousand Cantonese living in Shanghai.²⁶ Most of the representative modern enterprises established in the course of the *Yangwu* Movement were built on the close ties between the Qing officials and the Cantonese merchants group in Shanghai, such as Tang Tingshu, Zheng Guanying, Xu Run, and other Cantonese shareholders. This alliance did not remain in the domestic territory but expanded overseas. Okamoto Takashi 岡本隆司, in his empirical study on the Sino-Korean relationship during the late 19th century, concluded that Tang Tingshu sought to exert strong influence on Korea's modernization scheme by helping the Cantonese take a firm hold in Korea [Okamoto 2004: 131–132]. Seen this way, the Tongshuntai was also part of this network and absorbed political nutrients from the bottom to grow.

2) The Principle behind the Constitution of the Cantonese Network: From Family and Fellow Townsmen to Partners

Tan Jiasheng's hometown

Above, the economic forces of the Cantonese merchant network in East Asia propping the Tongshuntai Firm up and its distinct political character in Korea were analyzed mainly through the interpersonal network built by Liang Lunqing in Shanghai. Then, this chapter will be assigned to discuss the structural principles of this network and community. First of all, it is essential to investigate the relationship between the two key

members—Tan Jiesheng and Liang Lunqing.

Tan and Liang were both from Gaoyao County, Guangdong. According to the census of 1993, there were totally 232 surname groups in the Gaoyao County population. Among them the most populous surname group is the Liang group while the Tan group was not small having over 5000 people [Gaoyao-xian Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 1996: 143]. Although it is still unclear which village of Gaoyao County Liang Lunqing was born in, earlier research indicates that Tan Jiesheng's place of birth in Gaoyao County was Jinli 金利 villiage. This is current Jinli town which had a population of 58,700 in 1993, consisting primarily of farmers. One of Jinli village's special characteristics is the high rate of migration. In 1993 there were 9,600 of the fellow villagers living in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, and over 2,300 of the Jinli people living overseas [Gaoyao-xian Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 1996: 89].

As far as the previous researches have clarified, the Qing-period Gaoyao County Gazetteer was published in 1826 (*Gaoyao xianzhi* 高要縣志) and the closest one to the period of our discussion might be that of 1947, *Zhonghua Minguo Gaoyao xianzhi chubian* 中華民國高要縣志初編 (Republic of China Gazetteer of Gaoyao County, First Edition). According to the gazetteer of 1947, the Tan surname group of Gaoyao County consisted of 20 clans with distinct ancestral linages, and the Tans living in Jinli village mostly belonged to the Maogang 茅岡 Tan clan. The earliest ancestors of the Maogang Tan clan is said to have migrated from the Zhaoqing prefectural seat to Maogang village in Fanzhou 范州 region. By 1947, there had already been 20 generations of the Maogang Tan clan and they numbered to 680. Meanwhile, over 1,770 members of the Maogang Tan clan left Maogang village and migrated again to other areas, who were divided to the following ten groups: Guqiu 古球 village (*xi* 系) (70 people), Nanbian 南邊 community (*she* 社) (120), Dongba 東壩 village (180), Xiba 西壩 village (100), Guji 谷基 village (240), Dabo 大播 village (90), Yinxin 垠心 village (130), Panlong 蟠龍 village (50), Pangu 盤古 village (50), and Xinjiao 新橋 village (50)[Liang 1947: 242–244].²⁷

Active migration trend for seeking livelihood was witnessed in Gaoyao County of 1947 as well. At that time, there was over 3,000 people from Gaoyao living in Hong Kong. Most of them were merchants, mainly dealing with import goods [Liang 1947: 518]. Likewise, a fair number of Gaoyao people went to Shanghai. Of the five directors of the Shanghai Commercial Convention Association previously mentioned, two were Cantonese. One was Tang Jiechen mentioned in the previous chapter, and the other was Liang Yutang 梁鈺堂 (Liang Ronghan 梁榮翰) from Gaoyao County, who was the manager of the Yongtaiyuan

Teahouse (Yongtaiyuan Chazhan 永泰源茶棧) and the chief director of the Nanyang Lottery Company (Nanyang Mujuan Caipiaoju 南洋募捐彩票局).²⁸

Through those circumstantial evidence, in my original article of 2008, I speculated that Tan Jiesheng might be from the Maogang Tan clan in Jinli town, and Liang Lunqing might be also born in Jinli town because the Liang clan was the largest lineage group there. However, there is no direct evidence to prove this speculation. Later, unexpected chance to meet Tan Jiesheng's great-grandson, Mr. Tan Yongfeng 譚永鋒, let me know the presence of a booklet about the history of the Tans written by Tan Jiesheng's 9th son, Tan Tingze 譚廷澤, where he said that the Tan family's native home was not Jinli village but was Mogang 墨岡 township. In another article of 2011, I updated this issue and introduced Tan Tingze's testimony, while adding my own argument that Tan Jiesheng still could be born in the present-day Jinli region and Mogang might be part of Jinli. Fortunately, with the help of Professor Zhou Xiang 周湘 of History Department, Sun Yat-sen University (Zhongshan Daxue 中山大學), I obtained trails to the descendants of the Tan family and went to Jinli town in 2014 to visit Tan Jiesheng's great-grandson Mr. Tang Yonghe 譚永和. His address was Maijiang Sizu 麥江四組 in Dongwei 東圍 village of Jinli town, Gaoyao district, and he explained to me that the Tan family had lived in Jinli for generations, and the Maijiang of their current address had originated from Mogang, which has the same pronunciation in Cantonese. Even though he had never heard of Liang Lunqing, he did say that there were many families with the surname Liang in their village and intermarriages between the two families was common. Nevertheless, more investigation is needed to make it clear whether Liang Lunqing was born in Jinli.

Kinship by marriage: The affinity between Liang Lunqing and Tan Jiesheng

It is undoubtable that Liang Lunqing and Tan Jiesheng were both Cantonese born in Gaoyao County, and both belonged to the Guangdong-Zhaoqing commercial community. While it was this hometown relationship which first brought them together, later they became tied further firmly when Liang Lunqing married Tan Jiesheng's elder sister. Ishikawa has found a letter in "Tongtai laixin" where Liang Lunqing refers to Tan Jiesheng as his younger brother-in-law, which also points to their family relationship by marriage [Ishikawa 2004a: 148–149]. Besides this letter, there are abundant additional evidences in "Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu."

On the eve of the First Sino-Japanese War in June 1894, Tan Jie-

sheng fled from Hanseong to Incheon. According to his letter sent to Liang Lunqing after arriving in Incheon, his elder brother Tan Qinghu left for Shanghai on the steamship Zhendong (Zhendong-hao 鎮東號) of the CMSNC on the 18th day of the 5th month (June 21st) leading the Tan family members, including his own family, Tan Jiesheng's wife and children, and his nephew Tan Tingchang 譚挺昌.²⁹ In the same letter, Tan Jiesheng also said that he didn't mean to disturb "brother-in-law" too much, but he could not help asking his help because it was difficult to take care of children during the wartime. Judging from later correspondences, Tan's wife seems to have carried a baby.³⁰ She might be Ms. He, the second wife of Tan Jiesheng, because Tan Tingze stated that it was not until 1895 that Tan Jiesheng married his third wife Hu Yunqing 胡雲卿, Tan Tingze's mother. Besides, Tan Tingze said that Ms. He lived with Tan Jiesheng in Hanseong and gave birth to her first son, Tan Tingkun, in 1885. As the daughter born in Shanghai in 1894 is absent in Tan Tingze's description of siblings, she presumably met a premature death [Tan 1973: 4, 25–26].

Finally, in July 1894, Tan Jiesheng departed Incheon via Yantai for Shanghai where he stayed until the middle of August. In Shanghai, Tan discussed about wartime business with Liang Lunqing and met his trade partner, Chen Dasheng, who was the manager of the Xianglong Firm, Kobe, and then visited Shanghai. After all, Tan decided to return to Korea, and on the 23rd day of the 8th month (September 22nd) he once again left for Yantai.³¹ Tan Jiesheng spent approximately one month in Yantai, then finally returned to Incheon on a British naval ship. During his stay in Yantai, correspondences exchanged between Tan and Liang Lunqing carried not a few statements concerned with family matters.³² Liang Lunqing sent a letter to say that he would return to his hometown with "my sister-in-law (*xijin* 細姪), nephew (or niece, *sheng* 甥), and your [i.e. Tan's] sister (*xijie* 細姐, i.e. Liang's wife)."³³ "Sister-in-law" and "nephew (or niece)" here could possibly refer to Tan's second wife Ms. He and her children, because Tang Jiesheng questioned the safety of the new-born baby's ship travel in their letter exchange. As the letter "*xi*" 細 in the Cantonese dialect generally means concubines, Ms. He was not Tan's first wife. Likewise, this wording suggests that Tan's sister was not Liang's first wife either, being called *xijie*. Generally speaking, the first wives would stay in their hometown to serve their husbands' families, whereas it was concubines who would accompany their husbands away from home, taking care of their lives. The fact that Tan's sister lived with Liang in Shanghai together is another evidence to supports this conclusion.

There is another noteworthy topic found in the contents of these letters. In the letter to Tan on the 11th day of the 9th month (October 9th, 1894), Liang was greatly excited to bring the news that the names of the applicants who passed the imperial examination in Shuntian Prefecture (Shuntianfu 順天府, the present Beijing area) were announced and a man named Ruxuan 汝煊 passed as the 250th candidate. Reading letters exchanged following this news, this “Ruxuan” might be either a son, younger brother, or other close relative of Liang Lunqing. This good news for the Liang family was probably the main reason for Liang Lunqing’s sudden journey to his hometown along with his whole family and Tan’s family. Learning this news, Tan Jiesheng expressed his congratulations to Liang by replying: “Congratulations! Ruxuan’s success as the 250th candidate is not only an honor for you, but we here can be proud of it.”³⁴ As the above, the tie between the Liang and Tan families is a typical example of relationship interwoven by native-place, marriage, and business elements, which is easily seen in overseas Chinese community.³⁵

Partnerships and joint capital

Tan Jiesheng and Liang Lunqing, starting their relationship based on native-place bondage and marriage affinity, entered a business partner relationship. In “Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu” both the words “friend” (*you* 友) and “partner” (*ban* 伴) appear frequently. In the Tongshuntai documents, this “partner” is specifically used to refer to men working in the same branches or partner shops in its trade business, like calling “Xianglong partners” (*xianglongban* 祥隆伴) or “Incheon partners” (*renban* 仁伴). For instance, in a letter to Tan Tinggeng in the Tongshuntai Incheon branch, who was acting as the manager during the war-time, Liang Lunqing said that “the Xianglong Firm still has a partner (*ban*) in Kobe. Chen Dasheng already (left Shanghai and) returned to Kobe last month. If you have business in Kobe, you can ask for him. The Wangchanghe Firm has a partner in Nagasaki as well. Pan Dachu has not yet returned to his hometown. So, if you need to transfer merchandise (via Japan), you can just ask for him. (People of) the Fuhe Firm in Yokohama has not yet left the port as well. Therefore, everything could be managed as usual.”³⁶ Here the word “partner” (*ban*) seems to be the equivalent of an employee, but still carries some connotations of a “partnership.” As Chinese businesses are mostly formed through the pooling of capital, their conception of “partnership” is clearly at odds with the composition of a Western company.

To understand the characteristics of a Chinese merchant network,

we should first understand the traditional Chinese joint venture system of pooling capital (*hegu* 合股 or *hehuo* 合夥). This system was similar to the Western partnership in the way that investors buy shares to become the shareholders. However, in the Chinese system, sometimes labor also can be interpreted as investment and be calculated as shares, which is called “person stock” (*shenggu* 身股). In this case, employees in Chinese business logically could be accepted as stockholders or partners as well. Besides, in the case that an employee’s contribution to business is outstanding, he could not only rise to be promoted to the higher position of a manager, but his stock bonuses would be increased also. Consequently, the word “partners” in the Chinese traditional business means not only employees but also active participants in business. Relevant business responsibilities also varied in accordance with shareholding status. For example, the calculation and distribution of end-of-year bonuses were based on shares held. If bankruptcy occurred, the responsibility for the settling of accounts would be based on distinct categories of shares, unlike the limited liability shareholding system of the West. In the case of larger companies or those managing complicated trading networks—like the native banks mainly dealing with the remittance service of Shanxi merchants (Shanxi Piaohao 山西票號)—, even stronger emphasis was placed on the business ability in selecting managers. However, there were many cases as well in which managers were to be designated exclusively by the largest share-holders. Managers could increase their shares by reinvesting his return in buying additional shares too.³⁷

In view of this, the Tongshuntai Firm in Korea was part of the “partner” network established by the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai. This network not only dealt with customers but also probably was involved in joint investment. One of the examples by which to see how this system worked in the Tongshuntai business is the Tonghui Steamship Company discussed above. Apart from the Qing government’s investment, the largest shareholders of this venture are said to have been the two most famous Cantonese merchant businesses in Korea—the Tongshuntai and the Yisheng Firms [Na 1996: 132–133]. Nevertheless, the truth is that the money for this investment was collected as a joint contribution of the Shanghai Guangzhou-Zhaoqing commercial community. Within “Tongtai laixin” is a letter sent from the Yisheng Firm in Incheon to Tan Jiesheng, which mentions a man named Tang Yuanxing 唐袁興 in Shanghai who was selling his shares in the Tonghui Steamship Company. He was willing to mail the share certificates to the Tongshuntai Firm in exchange for the payment which would come from the Tongtai Firm.³⁸ From this instance we can see that the Tonghui Steamship Company

raised funds through the model of partnership and joint investment. The Yisheng Firm and the Tongshuntai quite possibly were the intermediaries for collecting funds from Shanghai. An additional example to learn this company's capital source is seen in the process of dissolving the partnerships and selling its steamship Hanyang to the Korean government. When Tan Jiesheng remitted 10,000 yuan for the proceeds to Shanghai in the end of 1893, he had Liang Lunqing divide and pay the sum on the basis of 42 yuan per one stock to each Shanghai "stock friends" (*guyou* 股友, namely shareholders), while at the same time he asked each stockholder to liquidate the company's debt of thousands of yuan on the same basis of stock sharing ratio.³⁹ Later, when the Korean government delayed the settlement of the balance of purchase, this overdue payment of 20,000 yuan caused the shareholders in Shanghai to press this issue. In a letter from Tan Jiesheng to Liang Lunqing, Tan reported that the Bureau of Transportation of the Korean government promised to pay until the 6th month of 1894 and that, "As soon as I receive this amount, I can distribute it in accordance with the stock share ratio. Please inform it to all our stock friends."⁴⁰ Although this research is still in its preliminary stage and awaits further verification, this partnership style for pooling capital was an important medium for the formation of the Cantonese merchant network in East Asia. The transnational nature of the Cantonese merchants' pooling of capital also surely influenced the local economy in East Asia as it flowed through this network.

Additionally, we can also find the same kind of partnerships existing in the Tongshuntai's internal organization. Tan Tinggeng of the Tongshuntai Incheon branch wrote a letter to Tan Jiesheng during his stay in Yantai, in which he expressed his dissatisfaction with an employee named Shao Songzhi 邵松芝. He said that Shao would never discuss with him during business deals and would take unauthorized actions in business while ignoring him.⁴¹ Tan Jiesheng wrote back saying: "Due to our brotherly love and the fact that we all serve for the same shareholders, let this go so that there will not be scorn between us and our greater interests will be preserved."⁴² From the tone of Tan Jiesheng's letter we can see that the employees working for the Tongshuntai were not Western-style hires, but rather they were members belonging to a kind of an economic community with hierarchical jointly-owned partnership based on native-place bondage and family relationships between them. Furthermore, the Tongshuntai Firm in Korea could be defined as one nexus within this Cantonese merchant network connecting treaty ports in East Asia, which was formed and expanded based on the same identity and intimacy.

The hierarchical and self-reliant nature of the partnership network

It is worth noting that there might be a coexistence of hierarchy and independence within this business network. In the course of the Tongshuntai Firm's engagements in multifaceted transactions overseas, the final decisions relating to the transactions seem to have been made by Liang Lunqing in Shanghai especially. Tan Jiasheng generally followed Liang Lunqing's marketing decisions in the collection, shipment, and distribution of imports and exports. Even in the payment settlement is that the case. In 1893, the Hanseong head office of the Tongshuntai Firm exported Korean goods to the Fuhe Firm in Yokohama on commission sale. Later, the payment for those goods, called Hanseong shop goods (*hanhao huo* 漢號貨) in the documents, was remitted not to Hanseong but to Shanghai. Not only in the transaction with the partner company shops like the Fuhe Firm within the Cantonese merchant network, the other case of commission sale showed the same pattern. The Japanese company Fujita-gumi 藤田組 sold the goods exported by the Tongshuntai Incheon branch, called Incheon shop goods (*Renhao huo* 仁號貨), but the Inchoen branch was not paid for their goods until 1894. Responding to the Incheon branch's complaint about being stiffed, the Xianglong Firm in Kobe took the initiative to intervene and urged Fujita-gumi to pay as soon as possible. However, when the payment was made in full, Fujita-gumi remitted 17,604 yuan by a HSBC telegram not to Incheon but to the Tongtai Firm.⁴³ From the above case, both in marketing decisions and in control of money flow, the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai was in a higher position than the Tongshuntai Firm.

Nevertheless, in general there still existed a partial self-reliance. With the outbreak of the First Sino-Japanese War, Liang Lunqing repeatedly urged Tan Jiasheng to transport the whole stocks of goods in the Hanseong head office to Shanghai by ship. However, Tan Jiasheng decided rather to do his best to sell all the existing stocks at a low price locally, in consideration of the Korean import taxes which would be levied twice if acting according to Liang's instruction.⁴⁴

On the one hand, the inter-company relationship, even uniformly called "partnership," might have some layers and gaps. Tan Jiasheng of the Tongshuntai Firm once exported "goods through improper route" to Kobe and from the language of the text it seems that he was smuggling goods or items prohibited for import. This cargo failed to be unloaded in Kobe and the Xianglong Firm in Kobe could not but transfer this cargo to Yokohama, asking the Fuhe Firm there to find a way to pass the Customs inspection. Learning the course of events, Liang Lunqing wrote a letter to Tan Jiasheng, saying that he was very disturbed about "asking a

favor of a friend to handle” these “goods through improper route.” Liang told Tan about a complaint letter from Chan Dasheng of the Xianglong Firm. Further he warned Tan to find another way to sell his goods without causing trouble for the partner company shops.⁴⁵ As for the distinction between “partners” and “friends,” the meaning of joint partnership, and the relationship between the head office and the branches, etc., there are still many unclear aspects of the operating principles and the structure of the Cantonese merchants in East Asia, which awaits further research.

The process of Tan Jiasheng and the Tongshuntai's independence from the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai

Half-century-long history of the Tongshuntai Firm in Korea showed that Tan Jiasheng gradually took the leadership in the trade, strengthened his control on business, and finally became independent from the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai. The ownership was definitely handed over to Tan later. However, it was not an easy process. Judging from the letters in the initial stage of the Tongshuntai firm in 1880s, Tan Jiasheng's elder brother Tan Qinghu in Incheon sent instructions to him in Hanseong regarding the time of purchase and sale of goods. Tan Tingze, Tan Jiasheng's son, stated in his memoir that his father Tan Jiasheng at first came to Korea with his elder brother “Mr. Chenghu 澄湖,” who was not accustomed to the climate of Korea and left only 3 years later. Moreover, he argued that this elder brother retreated to his hometown, Gaoyao, to take care of his mother and never came back to Korea. Consequently, Tan Tingze emphasized Tan Jiasheng's sole contribution in the Tongshuntai Firm's business development in Korea from the very early stage.

However, the records of the Tongshuntai documents reveals the facts contrary to his argument. “Mr. Chenghu” in Tan Tingze's statement is certainly Tan Qinghu who called Tan Jiasheng his third younger brother in letters. Not only Tan Jiasheng and Tan Qinghu, but at least 3 others out of 5 Tan brothers are seen in the various records of the 1880s. Tan Qinghu assumed the position of the Incheon branch manager, the first branch of the Tongshuntai Firm built in Korea. A year later, the second branch was opened in Hanseong which became the head office later, and Tan Jiasheng moved to Hanseong to take a position of the branch manager there. As the Incheon branch was more important for the storage of goods as well as import and export trade, it is not strange that this first Incheon branch was run by Tan Qinghu, his elder brother. As for the exact time when the two brothers came to Korea for the first time, there are still differing opinions. Yet, no matter whether it

was 1875, 1882, 1885, or 1888, Tan Tingze's argument that Tan Qinghu stayed in Korea only three years is certainly not true [Kang 2011a: Chap. 2].

Ishikawa argued that from the 1st month of 1890, the Hanseong head office and the Incheon branch divided the capital and became independent shops with separate accounts. However, business correspondences of the year 1894 between two shops still demonstrate that they were closely linked in business. Since their business itself was inseparable, I believe they only divided their accounts. In any case, more interesting thing is that directions about the business were not issued from Tan Qinghu but from Tan Jiesheng in Hanseong at the stage of 1894. All of the letters exchanged between Incheon and Hanseong dealt with the issues relating the import and export business, including loading and unloading of merchandise for overseas transportation, shipment between Incheon and Hanseong, remittance of settlement, exchange rate and prices in each area, etc. The Incheon branch followed the directions of the Hanseong head office in the handling of the flow of goods and money. Moreover, the correspondent of the Incheon branch was gradually changed to Tan Tinggeng, Tan Jiesheng's nephew. Tan Tinggeng reported about all specific details in business to Tan Jiesheng in Hanseong and waited for his orders. Tan Qinghu only occasionally sent letters in the name of the Incheon branch and he moreover frequently came into business disagreements with his younger brother in Hanseong. It can be said that Tan Jiesheng already replaced his elder brother's status to seize the leadership in business in Korea before 1894.

It is still unclear when Tan Qinghu returned to his hometown or left business in Incheon. Here is one clue to reply to this question. The member rosters of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Incheon (Chaoxian Renchuan Zhonghua Shangwu Zonghui 朝鮮仁川中華商務總會) in 1913 enumerated the name of its executive members, where the manager of the Tongshuntai Incheon branch as one of the executive members was listed as Tan Tinghu, Tan Jiesheng's eldest son. There is no name of Tan Qinghu. Meanwhile, the registration book of assets in the old Qing settlement in Incheon in 1913 still have a land lot whose owner was recorded as Tan Tinghu.⁴⁶ Though Tang Tingze said that this eldest son Tan Tinghu lived all along with his mother in his hometown to take care of the family's property, his argument is completely inconsistent with the facts from the above evidence. At the very least, Tan Jiesheng had closely controlled the organization of the Tongshuntai Firm's branches in Korea until 1910s when his eldest son replaced his brother to take charge of the Incheon branch.

My conclusion is that Tan Jiesheng had already replaced Tan Qinghu by gradually earning the trust of Liang Lunqing as his primary patron and the internal support of the Tongshuntai partners before the First Sino-Japanese War, and he took control over the entire enterprise of the Tongshuntai in Korea. One of the factors which aided Tan Jiesheng's rise significantly was the exceptional managerial ability of Tan Jiesheng, and the other is that the Tongshuntai in Hanseong had already overpowered the Incheon branch with the development of its sales market together with the social contacts it obtained with the officialdom. Another paper of mine published in English has exclusively dealt with this issue and concluded that the First Sino-Japanese War was a significant turning point in the business environment. Therefore, here I just briefly state my conclusions regarding this issue. Due to the loss of political sponsorship, growing competition of Japanese and Cantonese merchants, and the official oppression on Chinese capital in Korea after the defeat of the First Sino-Japanese War, Cantonese merchants' business in Korea became less lucrative and many Cantonese firms relocated from Korea to other treaty ports. But, Tan Jiesheng chose to continue his business in Korea. I suppose that he would buy the stocks of those returning to China and would buy back stocks from the shareholders in Shanghai, until he became the number-one shareholder and the actual proprietor of the company.⁴⁷

Recent research by Kim Huisin 金希信 shows that Tan Jiesheng from 1888 until August 1901 was the chief-executive of the Cantonese merchants group in Hanseong, and later from 1913 until 1927 he again assumed this post. According to my earlier research, this Cantonese merchant group withdrew its capital and left Korea in the period before and after Japan forced a merger with Korea in 1910. Therefore, I thought that the Tongshuntai must have experienced structural changes in the period from 1901 to 1913.⁴⁸

Finally, as for the collaborative stock relationships and Tan Jiesheng's process of growth, I want to introduce a very similar and interesting example of the Shanghai business tycoon Zheng Bozhao 鄭伯昭 (Cheang Park Chew, 1863–1951) who was born in Xiangshan County, Guangdong.⁴⁹ In 1919, Tan Jiesheng's 4th daughter Tan Xiuluan 譚秀鸞 married Zheng's son Zheng Guanzhu 鄭棺柱 in Shanghai. When Tan Jiesheng faced a bankruptcy after the failed rice and bean speculation of his sons, Zheng Bozhao gave Tan a remittance of 380,000 yuan to save him from the crisis. As it is well known to Chinese historians, Zheng was the chief comprador of the British and American Tobacco Company (BAT, Yingmei Yancao Gongsi 英美煙草公司), who became known as the "foreign tobacco selling king." He studied English in the Anglo-

Chinese College (Zhongxi Shuyuan 中西書院) of Shanghai, and after graduation he worked in the maritime customs, the railway companies, banks, and so on, until he began working in the tobacco industry at the age of 30 in 1893, when he entered the Yongtai Shop (Yongtaizhan 永泰棧), a partnership formed entirely of Cantonese shareholders. In the beginning Zheng did not have a high-ranking position at the Yongtai Shop, but later he succeeded in increasing rapidly the market share of the BAT by outstanding sales marketing of new-brand BAT cigarettes in China and was highly recognized both by shareholders of the Yongtai Shop and by the BAT. Finally, he was promoted to the manager of the Yongtai Shop when he set the record of cigarette sales as the top dealer in 1905. With these achievements, the BAT granted him an exclusive 15 year-long franchise in sales and distribution in the Chinese market in 1918. In the following year, Zheng left the Yongtai Shop to establish the Wing Tai Vo Tobacco Corporation (Yongtaihe Yancoo Gufen Youxian Gongsì 永泰和煙草股份有限公司) in 1921, whose shares were divided by the BAT and Zheng, respectively 51% and 49%. Yet the position of a chairman and general manager was taken by Zheng. Zheng also collaborated with the BAT on real estate ventures, and in 1920 he founded the Hong'an Real Estate Company (Hong'an Dichan Gongsì 宏安地產公司). With the rising price of real estate in 1920s Shanghai, Zheng's properties greatly increased in value. In the year 1937, when the value of his real estate in Shanghai had reached 30 million yuan, he then established the Dong Nan Real Estate Company (Dongnan Dichan Gongsì 東南地產公司) in Hong Kong where his investments made him a millionaire. When the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, Zheng moved to Hong Kong. In 1951, at the age of 88, he died in Macao.

Taking an overview of Zheng Bozhao's life, we can see the pattern of a success story often seen in the Cantonese merchant group. He used his managerial skills to build the primary capital, seized opportunities for further success, and finally started his own independent business. On the other hand, real estate investments became another main source to increase wealth. He was similar to Tan Jiasheng in many ways. Both men can be said to be the great examples in the history of the family fortunes which have climbed their way to the top from the positions like employees with no capital in the framework of the Cantonese merchant network in modern East Asia.

3. CONCLUSION

The late 19th century and the early 20th century was a transitional period in modern history. The Tongshuntai used Incheon as a springboard to accumulate capital in East Asian trade and became a representative Chinese company in Korea. The Tongshuntai and its internal participants, partner company shops both in and out of Korea, collaborators, etc., were overall a network composed completely of the Cantonese and especially people sharing the native-place bondage of the Guangzhou-Zhaoqing region. This native-place based network was strengthened through marriage alliances.

It suggests insightful implications if we compare the Cantonese merchants in Korea seen through the example of the Tongshuntai with the Fujianese merchants in Japan studied by Lin Manhong 林满红. The political activities and interventions in the local society by the Cantonese merchant group in Korea were far more prominent. Fujianese merchants in Japan could not exploit political resources at all and political elements did not become involved in their business very much. These merchants only relied on their networks of native-place relationships to search for business opportunities in Japan. In contrast, the Tongshuntai arrived in Incheon right at the time of the Open Port period when the Qing exerted gradually stronger political influence in Korea and its presence in Korea greatly benefited Chinese merchants' economic activities in Korea. Especially, Cantonese connection with Western companies as compradors and with the *Yangwu* faction in the Qing court, in addition to the Cantonese group in the Qing officialdom in Korea, allowed Cantonese merchants to enjoy preferential status in Korea. The Tongshuntai Firm was the typical case which even assumed the semi-official role for the Qing government, including lending the firm's name to the national loan and serving as a public treasury for the Chinese diplomatic mission in Korea.

Guangdong was always the headquarters for European business in China, and Cantonese people launched the movement northward to Shanghai and other coastal ports following foreign companies after the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing introduced the treaty port system to East Asia. From the year 1858, Japan had officially opened its ports to the outside world, and Cantonese people also entered Japan along with foreign companies. With compradors as their guides, these Cantonese took others from their hometowns with them to quickly open businesses and settle down [Gong 2003: 165–166; Liu 2006: 79]. The formation of the Cantonese merchant network within the East Asian trade was linked to the gradual opening of Asia to Europe and America. While the Cantonese

merchants in Korea were fundamentally part of the larger Cantonese merchant network in East Asia, they also have their distinct character as a supporter in executing the Qing policy toward Korea. They enjoyed political support and their relationship to the government was also very close. On this point, the Cantonese merchants in Korea and the Fujianese merchants in Japan considerably differ. Larsen points out these kinds of characteristics of the Chinese merchants in Korea and argued that the Qing policy towards Korea before the First Sino-Japanese War should be explained as a kind of “informal imperialism.” According to his framework, the Chinese merchants in Korea were to be a product and agent of this informal imperialism. Above all, the Tongshuntai Firm and the Cantonese merchants were to be the most notable example.

In the same way, we should pay attention to the trans-nationality of the Cantonese merchants. The Cantonese merchants followed the expansion of the treaty port system, and they took shape as a powerful business diaspora. This diaspora was a kind of stateless and multinational migrant community. Such character became increasingly prominent after the First Sino-Japanese War broke out and political sponsorship was stripped away. On the eve of this war, Liang Lunqing's letter revealed this character of Cantonese as a transnational merchant diaspora. He wrote, “Tang Jichang 唐紀常 already returned to Canton yesterday, yet Lifeng 隸封 is still here in Shanghai. Please send this news to Consul Tang. The epidemic in Hong Kong was almost terminated in these two days. I heard that it still lingers on in Canton but abated a lot than before. As disasters struck every corner, I do not know where we could rest pleasantly. So, I will take things as they come and be satisfied with them.”⁵⁰ Tang Jichang mentioned above is the eldest son of Tang Jiechen. He later inherited his father's position as a comprador of Jardine, Matheson & Co. The man named “Lifeng” is not yet identified but seems to be one family member of the Tangs, relating with both Tang Jichang and Tang Shaoyi. Just like this, Liang Lunqing kept in touch with the Tang family of Xiangshan to circulate frequently their news across Shanghai and Hanseong. At the same time, he watched the latest information of Hong Kong and Canton to pass on to Cantonese fellows living in Korea and far away. In this letter, he concluded that Cantonese merchants would have to be able to adapt wherever they might go. That could be the core principle of a trans-national diaspora.

Like Liang Lunqing who built personal connections with compradors and officials in Shanghai at the top of Cantonese merchant network in East Asia, Tan Jiasheng in Hanseong who was located in the remote

corner of this network built up his own interpersonal network especially through marriage. There is no doubt that the marriage relationship with Zheng Bozhao, the largest BAT agency in China, was very helpful in raising the reputation of Tan Jiasheng. I suspect that Zheng Bozhao could be the same lineage member of Zheng Guanying. Two Zhengs were all Xiangshan natives and died in Macao.

In addition, Tan Jiasheng's 10th son, Tan Tinghuang 譚廷煌 married the daughter of Wu Baqun 吳拔群, a Chinese manager of the HSBC Incheon branch. In the interview with Tan Naijie 譚乃傑, Tan Tinghuang's son, he said that the Wu family were from Xiangshan as well. He also remarked that Wu Baqun's father named Wu Xiaotang 吳曉棠 worked in one of the HSBC branches in Japan and married Japanese woman. Besides, both Wu Baqun and his eldest son worked for the CNC. Tan Naijie's mother could speak English and had worked in a telephone company in Hong Kong before she married Tan Tinghuang.

That is not the end of story. In the interview, Tan Jiasheng's great-granddaughter Ms. Tan Yingfan 譚櫻凡 said that her father Tan Nailiang 譚乃亮, who was born in Incheon in 1918, had told about the Tongshuntai Firm's franchise business of the BAT in Korea. If accepting her testimony, the Tan and Zheng families were certainly typical examples of overlapping relations of native-place and marriage alliance and business.⁵¹ Moreover, Tan Jiasheng's grandson Tan Nailiang worked at the Bank of China (Zhongguo Yinhang 中國銀行) in Shanghai after graduating from a college in Hong Kong and married the youngest daughter of the famous Chinese political thinker Yang Du 楊度. Yang Du had led the late Qing constitutional movement with Liang Qichao 梁啟超 together. However, he was also known as a strong advocate for Hongxian 洪憲 monarchy of Yuan Shikai, with his work "Juxian jiu guo lun" 君憲救國論 (A Constitutional Monarchy Will Save the Nation) in 1915. Coincidentally in the same year of 1915, Tan Jiasheng received the third-degree medal from the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (Nongshangbu 農商部) of the Peking Government headed by Yuan Shikai. Yang Youqi 楊友麒, the grandson of Yang Du, married Liang Qichao's granddaughter Wu Liming 吳荔明, and the couple together published a book entitled *Yang Du yu Liang Qichao: Women de zufu he waizufu* 楊度與梁啟超: 我們的祖父和外祖父 (Our Grandfathers Liang Qichao and Yang Du) [Yang and Wu 2017]. In fact, Yang Youqi and Tan Jiasheng's great-granddaughter Ms. Tan Yingfan are cousins.

Furthermore, Tan Jiasheng's granddaughter Tan Guiyun 譚桂雲 (Tan Nailiang's sister) married Li Jiashu 李家曙, who is a great-grandson of Li Zhaoqing 李昭慶, Li Hongchang's sixth younger brother. She

lives in Singapore. Li Guoyuan 李國源, Li Zhaoqing's grandson, married the eldest daughter of Duan Qirui 段祺瑞, the Chinese prime minister.

The example of the Tongshuntai Firm and its networking demonstrates that the elite class living through modern China were highly inter-connected each other beyond national borders with Shanghai as a point of intersection.

—Originally written in Chinese
Translated by the Toyo Bunko

NOTES

- * This paper has originally been published in Korean as follows: Kang Jin-A 강진아. 2007. Gwangdong neteuwokeu wa Joseon Hwasang Dongsuntae 광동네트워크와 조선화상 동순태 (Canton-network and overseas Chinese merchant, the Tongshuntai Firm). *Sahak Yeongu* 사학연구 (Historical Review) 88: 775–820. For translated publication for NART, I partly revised the original paper with reference to the latest researches of mine as well as of others.
- 1 Research on Fujianese traders in Nagasaki began with the publication of the books by Yamaoka Yuka 山岡由佳 [Yamaoka 1995] and Liao Chiyang 廖赤陽 [Liao 2000], which analyzed the Taiyi Firm and the relationship it had with its largest partner, the Dingji 鼎記 Firm in Shanghai. This work on the Shanghai trade by Chinese merchants in Japan was then continued by Wada Masahiro 和田正広 and Weng Qiyin 翁其銀 [Wada and Weng 2004]. Concerning the works of Furuta Kazuko and Liao Chiyang, Ha Seborg's 河世鳳, excellent book review [Ha 2000] supplied an insightful proposal relevant to the study of the East Asian trade.
 - 2 See [Ishikawa 2000; Larsen 2000]. For a review of Larsen's study and an analysis of the research of overseas Chinese in Korea, see [Kang 2007a; 2007b].
 - 3 Among the documents in the Kyujanggak Archives concerning the Tongshuntai, in addition to these four collections there are also records of the loans given in the name of the Tongshuntai, as well as the list of the amounts of loans and repayment. This is the 1893 "Tongshuntaihao jiekuan hetong" 同順泰號借款合同 and the 1892–93 "Tongshuntai dier jiejyin anchang shouju" 同順泰第二借銀按償收据 compiled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Korean government (Chongri Gyoseop Tongsang Samu Amun 總理交涉通商事務衙門).
 - 4 Please refer to [Ishikawa 2004b; 2005].
 - 5 Letter from Tan Jiasheng to Liang Lunqing, 16th day of the 9th month,

- Jiawu year (October 14th, 1894), “Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu,” vol. 21-1.
- 6 On January 1st, 2014, I visited Mr. Tan Yonghe 譚永和, the grandson of Tan Tinghu (great-grandson of Tan Jiesheng), at Maijiang Sizu in Dongwei village of Jinli town, Gaoyao district, and was partially informed on the most recent circumstances of Tan Jiesheng’s descendants, in addition to confirming that Tan Jiesheng’s children had his remains transported from Korea to be buried in his Gaoyao hometown. Presently, Tang Jiesheng’s tomb has been seriously damaged. Later in 2016, I was very grateful that the local historian Mr. Su Zeming 蘇澤明 and Mr. Tan Yonghe excavated by themselves the stone inscription of Tan Jiesheng’s tomb and sent me photographs of it.
 - 7 For information on Tan Jiesheng’s family situation and his descendants, please see [Kang 2011a: Chap. 2].
 - 8 Letter from (Tan) Tinggeng to Tan Jiesheng, 9th day of the 2nd month, Jiawu year (March 15th, 1894), “Tongtai laixin,” vol. 5.
 - 9 Letter from Cai Binghe to Tan Jiesheng, written by lamplight 18th day of the 1st month, Jiawu year (February 23rd, 1894), “Tongtai laixin,” Vol. 5.
 - 10 I have already discussed how I have determined familial relationships among Tongshuntai workers by the way they addresses each other in the letters as uncle and nephew or as brothers, but the way Tan Jiesheng refers to himself and addresses Tan Peilin 譚沛霖 in his letters as his “brother of the same clan” (*zongdi* 宗弟, *zongxiong* 宗兄) is also just a polite way to address someone with the same surname who is not necessarily related by blood. Therefore, we can also guess that they were not related but were simply fellow townspeople and business partners.
 - 11 For information on those listed here, see [Ishikawa 2004b] and [Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Jindaishi Yanjiusuo 1972: vol. 4], which give information such as the names, birthplace, and numbers of all the Chinese merchants who came to the various Korean trading ports in the years 1885 and 1886.
 - 12 Letters from Chen Dasheng to Tan Jiesheng, “Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu,” vol. 1-3, 2nd day of the 1st month, Jiawu year (February 7th, 1894); vol. 1-13, 28th day of the 1st month, Jiawu year (March 5th, 1894); vol. 1-16, February 3rd, 1895. Also, letters from Tan Jiesheng to Chen Dacheng such as vol. 30-5, 29th day of the 2nd month, Yiwei year (March 25th, 1895), among numerous others.
 - 13 Many letters from Tan Jiesheng to Tan Peilin, “Tongshuntai wangfu wenshu,” vol 13-4, dated the 9th day of the 3rd month, Jiawu year (February 14th, 1894); from Tan Peilin to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 1-5, received the 7th day of the 2nd month, Jiawu year (March 13th, 1894); from Tan Peilin to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 10-7, sent on the 19th day of the 11th month, Jiawu year (December 15th, 1894); from Tan Jiesheng to Tan Peilin, vol. 24-8, 11th day of the 11th month, Jiawu year (December

- 7th, 1894), among numerous others.
- 14 In March 1895, Tongshuntai sent six cases of white ginseng to the Anhetai in Hongkong via Chen Dasheng of the Xianglong Firm (Letter from Tan Jiesheng to Chen Dasheng, vol. 30-5, 29th day of the 2nd month, Yiwei year (March 25th, 1895)).
 - 15 This kind of information network operated mostly as usual, even though it was used in the politically sensitive time of the Sino-Japanese War. The exact mechanism of this trading and information network operated meticulously under normal circumstances.
 - 16 See [Ishikawa 2005: 25, Table 2]. Ishikawa lists the Chenchengshun as unknown, but it is the Chenhengshun that sends correspondence in the 5th volume of “Tongshuntai baohaoji.”
 - 17 In the three collections of the Kyujanggak Archives, trade can be confirmed in 1888, 1891, 1894, 1895, 1897, 1898, and 1899. For the details of each year’s trade, see [Ishikawa 2005: 25, Table 2].
 - 18 [Ishikawa 2016: 459; Song 2007: 65, 68, 75]. Also see “Yueshang zhuidao Liang Lunqing ji” 粵商追悼梁綸卿紀 (Cantonese merchants’ memorial article on Liang Lunqing’s death), *Shen Bao* 申報, October 6th, 1924.
 - 19 [Liu 2006: 63–64]. According to Ishikawa’s research on Tongshuntai, the Cantonese merchant who came to Korea via Japan and was active among the Cantonese merchants in Korea with his management of the Dexing 德興 Firm was also named “Zhen Yizhi.” He argues that the Dexing Firm was the first Chinese business to enter Korea after the opening of the ports in 1883 when at that early time it moved from Kobe to Busan to open a store [Ishikawa 2016: 46], and he believes that its founder named Zheng Yizhi was in fact Zheng Guanying’s brother. Yet, I disagree that these two were the same person. Likewise, “Liang Yanqing” 梁炎卿, a comprador of the Tianjin branch of the Jardine, Matheson & Co., may have been a relative of Liang Lunqing, whereas Ishikawa’s point of view is that “Lunqing” was an alternative name and chance of relatedness is slight. I agree that “Lunqing” is an alternative name, but looking at Zheng Guanying’s fifth younger brother Zheng Yizhi (whose given name was “Guanfu” 官富 and had the alternative name “Yizhi”), and his ninth younger brother Zheng Dingzhi 鄭定之 (whose given name was “Jiuru” 九如 but had the alternative name “Dingzhi”), and seeing that they both had alternative names which included the component “zhi,” it seems that alternative names can also be related [Shanghai Tushuguan and Aomen Bowuguan 2007: 11, 17]. In addition, Zheng Guanying must have studied English very diligently in his youth to stand out among his peers, and he even once made plans with Liang Lunqing to study together [Shanghai Tushuguan and Aomen Bowuguan 2007: 3]. From the example of Zheng Guanying exhorting his brothers and sons to study English, his brothers may have also worked as compradors. Since I published the above result in my 2014 paper, I have made a research trip to consult the archival

collections of the Butterfield & Swire Co. at the University of London, where I confirmed that Zheng Yizhi was a younger brother of Zheng Guanying and the Tianjin comprador of the Butterfield & Swire Co. Ishikawa says that the Zheng Yizhi, the Dexing Firm manager, worked for the Gongxing 公興 Firm in Kobe before coming to Busan, but Zheng Yizhi (1861–1921), a younger brother of Zheng Guanying, was in 1881 already working in the Tianjin branch comprador office of the Butterfield & Swire Co. where he received the company's high appraisal. In 1886, at the age of 26, he was already the Tianjin comprador. As can be seen in the Butterfield & Swire Co. archival collection, in the year 1894 Zheng Yizhi took care of the company's affairs under the English name Yik Kee (London University SOAS Library, Special Collections, JSS II 1.3.3.2. 1894 Tientsin). At the same time, there are also the Korean Tongshuntai documents concerning the Dexing Firm, which show that this shop traded in rice. Therefore, these two people cannot be the same.

- 20 Larsen considers him a representative of the informal imperialism by which Chinese policy towards Korea acted to expand economic opportunity [Larsen 2000: 5–6].
- 21 Zhou Shouchen, whose ancestral home was Xin'an 新安 County, Guangdong (Bao'an 保安, now Bao'an district in Shenzhen), was born in Hong Kong. After he left his office in Korea in 1903, he became the director of the CMSNC in Tianjin and other foreign enterprises. After the Xinhai Revolution he went to Shanghai and founded the Bank of East Asia (Dongya Yinhang 東亞銀行), which specialized in commercial activities. He was for a time a member of Hong Kong's Sanitary Board (Weishengju 衛生局) as well as the Legislative Council (Lifaju 立法局). As the first Chinese member of the Executive Council of Hong Kong, he was knighted [Zheng and Zhou 2006]. Tang Guo'an 唐國安, who was a nephew of Tang Tingshu, was sent to study in America a year earlier than Tang Shaoyi and later founded and became the first president of Tsinghua University [Mou 2002: 60].
- 22 See [Lin 2004: 110]. The reason that so many of those selected to be sent to study in America through this program were from Xiangshan County was because Tang Tingshu and Rong Hong were both alumni of the Morrison Memorial School. This school was built in Macao in 1836 in honor of the missionary Robert Morrison, and was the first Western-style school in Macao. In 1842 it was moved to Hong Kong [Chen 2002: 53]. Rong Hong entered the Morrison (Preparatory) School in 1835, and went to America for study in 1847. Tang Tingshu, as his father was connected to the Morrison School in Hong Kong, entered the school in 1842 and went to America for study in 1848 [Ouyang 2004: 335].
- 23 Letter from Tan Jiesheng to Chen Dasheng, vol. 11-10, sent on the 10th day of the 12th month, Renchen year (January 27th, 1893); Let-

- ter from Tan Jiasheng to Liang Lunqing, vol. 13-1, delivered the 26th day of the 12th month, Renchen year (February 12th, 1893); W. H. Wilkinson, Seoul to N. R. O'Connor, Peking, No. 9, January 11th, 1894, FO 228/1168 (1894), To and From Korea, 1-52d, pp. 89a-90a, British National Archives, London.
- 24 Letter from Tan Jiasheng to Liang Lunqing, vol. 12-1, 10th day of the 12th month, Renchen year (January 27th, 1893).
 - 25 Letter from Tan Jiasheng to Liang Lunqing, vol. 20-1, received 5th day of the 6th month, 1896; vol. 20-2, received 7th day of the 6th month, 1896. For more on the business activities of the Tongshuntai and Cantonese merchants' understanding of and response to the Sino-Japanese War, see my two articles in Korea [Kang 2014a; 2014b] and my article in English [Kang 2016].
 - 26 According to regular population registrations, in 1885 there were 21,013 Cantonese living in Shanghai; and in 1905 there were 54,559 Cantonese living in Shanghai, accounting for 15-20% of the migrated population in Shanghai from other provinces [Liu 2006: 80-81].
 - 27 In the late Qing period there was no toponym for Jinli village as *Jinli cun* 金利村, but there was a *Jinli xu* 金利墟 (Jinli village) which was not an area of the official Qing administration. In the late Qing period, Gaoyao County administered 5 sections and 9 districts. In 1996, Jinli had 5 sections and 8 districts and subsumed to Jinxi 金溪 community, East community, Central community, Qingping 清平 community, and West community [Gaoyao-xian Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 1996: 72]. From this it seems, Tan Jiasheng's native land of Jinli village (*Jinli cun*) was the entire Jinli market-town centered on Jinli village (*Jinli xu*).
 - 28 [Liu 2006: 84]. I have already used advertisements which appear in *Hwangseong Sinmun* 皇城新聞 (Imperial Daily) newspaper, taking the first steps to introduce Tongshuntai's Chinese lottery business [Kang 2004; 2008].
 - 29 In Japanese sources it is said that he went via Yantai. These include the records of Nose Tatsugorō 能勢辰五郎 (the Incheon Second Ranking Consul), Ōtori Keisuke (Japanese minister in Korea), and a report of June 20th, 1894, in *Chu-Han Ilbon kongsaqwan kirok* 駐韓日本公使館記錄 (Diplomatic documents of the Japanese Legation in Korea), 京 37 (32), on the Korean History Database published by the National Institute of Korean History (Guksa Pyeonchan Wiwonhoe 國史編纂委員會).
 - 30 Letter from Tan Jiasheng to Liang Lunqing, vol. 20-1, delivered the 5th day of the 6th month, Jiawu year (July 7th, 1894).
 - 31 Letter from Tan Jiasheng to Chen Dasheng, vol. 20-3, written the 1st day of the 10th month, Jiawu year (October 29th, 1894). Chen Dasheng left Shanghai on the 21st day of the 8th month (September 20th) and arrived in Kobe on the 26th of the 8th month (September 25th).
 - 32 Letter from Tan Jiasheng to Liang Lunqing, vol. 21-1, delivered the 16th day of the 9th month, Jiawu year (October 14th, 1894).

- 33 Letter from Liang Lunqing to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 7-8, delivered the 21st day of the 9th month, Jiawu year (October 19th, 1894).
- 34 In 1894 both provincial and metropolitan civil service examinations were held. As I cannot locate this name on the list of successful candidates of the metropolitan examination, I presume this was a provincial examination. Letter from Liang Lunqing to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 7-5, 21st day of the 9th month, Jiawu year (October 19th, 1894).
- 35 Letter from Liang Lunqing to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 7-7, 9th month of 1894 (date illegible).
- 36 Letter from Liang Lunqing to Tan Tinggeng, vol. 6-11, 10th day of the 9th month, Jiawu year (October 8th, 1894).
- 37 For the concept and structure of this form of partnership, see [Jeong 2002: 148–150]. For information on investors, employees, and the common system of “person stock” for labor; see [Jeong 2006: 355].
- 38 Letter from Chen Rushan of the Yishen Firm in Incheon to Tan Jiesheng, the 7th day of the 2nd month, Jiawu year (March 13th, 1894), “Tongtai laixin,” vol. 5. Chen writes, “The other day I received a letter from Shanghai by a man named Tang (Yuan?)xing. He said that he had a thousand silver yuan in Tonghui Steamship Company stock which he would send for us to handle, and that he had already collected payment from the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai.”
- 39 Letter from Tan Jiesheng to Liang Lunqing, vol. 13-1, the 26th day of the 12th month, Kuiyi year (February 1st, 1894).
- 40 Letter from Tan Jiesheng to Liang Lunqing, vol. 20-1, delivered the 5th day of the 6th month, Jiawu year (July 7th, 1894). The newly discovered “Lunchuan gongsi gupiao” in the Rare Books & Archival Collections of the Seoul National University library collects information on the certificates of each shareholder that Tan Jiesheng sent to the Tonghui Steamship Company.
- 41 Letter from Tan Tinggeng to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 7-13, 1st day of the 9th month, Jiawu year (September 29th, 1894); vol. 7-14, 2nd day of the 9th month, Jiawu year (September 30th, 1894).
- 42 Letter from Tan Jiesheng to Tan Tinggeng, Vol. 21-2, written in the evening of the 12th day of the 9th month, Bingshen year (September 18th, 1896).
- 43 Letter from Liang Lunqing to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 7-2, delivered the 25th day of the 8th month, Jiawu year (September 24th, 1894); vol. 7-3, delivered the 28th day of the 8th month, Jiawu year (September 27th, 1894); vol. 7-4, delivered the 7th day of the 9th month, Jiawu year (October 5th, 1894).
- 44 Letter from Tan Jiesheng to Liang Lunqing, vol. 20-2, delivered the 7th day of the 6th month, Jiawu year (July 9th, 1894).
- 45 Letter from Liang Lunqing to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 7-9, 1st day of the 10th month, Jiawu year (October 29th, 1894).
- 46 See [Yi and Song 2015: 97]. In this book the character “ting” 廷 which

- is used in Tan Tinghu's name is written incorrectly, but I consulted the original photographs to confirm that this was in fact his name. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Incheon was an overseas Chinese business group established in accordance with the Chamber of Commerce Law. The president was a man from Shandong named Chen Jikui 陳繼葵, and he ran a silk business called the Yonglaicheng 永來盛. He was originally from Fushan 福山, Shandong. The two assistant managers were the Cantonese merchant Zheng Yichu 鄭以初 and the Henan merchant Wang Chenghong 王成鴻. Zheng Yizhou ran the grocery store Dexing 德興, and he was originally from Xiangshan, Guangdong.
- 47 See [Kang 2014a; 2014b; 2016]. I have here made two points. The first is that Tan Jiesheng over the course of the First Sino-Japanese War was able to use his business talent to accumulate the great wealth which laid the foundations for his independence. By buying the stock of other shareholders, he gradually became the proprietor of the Tongshuntai. The second is that Liang Lunqing, Tan Jiesheng, and Tan Qinghu had different points of view concerning the development and investment in the Korean marketplace.
- 48 See [Kim H. 2017] and [Kang 2013]; for a Chinese version of the latter paper, see [Kang 2015].
- 49 For more on Zheng Bozhao, see [Kang 2011a: Chap. 2].
- 50 Letter from Liang Lunqing of the Tongtai Firm in Shanghai to Tan Jiesheng, vol. 5, delivered the 25th day of the 5th month, Jiawu year (June 28th, 1894).
- 51 For the study on the relationship between the Cantonese merchant group in East Asia and British firms, I have taken up the case of the Taikoo Sugar (Taigutang 太古糖) to explore these issues [Kang 2011b]. Recent research approach is to investigate these two commercial groups under the same conceptual framework of a transnational merchant diaspora. See Kang Jin-A, "The interdependent expansion of the British and Cantonese transnational merchant diaspora in modern East Asia: The case study of Tongshuntai," Panel: "Competition and competitive advantage: Merchants, agents, and industrialists and their changing networks in East Asia," The fourth AAS-in-ASIA Conference: Asia in motion: Beyond Borders and Boundaries, Korea University, Seoul, June 24th, 2017.

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