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The Korean Embassy to Ming-China in 1620:  
One Aspect of Diplomacy during the Reign of King Kwanghae

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The reign of the Choson Dynasty's 15th king, Kwanghae 光海, has been pointed to by historians as a period during which serious efforts were made by Korea to engage the Ming Dynasty diplomatically. Although the research to date has emphasized Kwanghae's rather unique diplomatic approach compared to other reigns, the investigation into the specifics of his approach and its relationship to diplomatic efforts before and after his reign is clearly insufficient. This article focuses on the embassy dispatched to China in 1620 under the leadership of I Chŏngkwi 李廷龜 in an attempt to offer a more concrete picture of Korean diplomacy toward Ming China and thus clarify at least one aspect of Korea's foreign policy at the time.

The formal purpose of the I Chŏngkwi Mission was to clarify false charges that had been made by the Ming Dynasty, but in actuality the Mission was a diplomatic gesture to explain Korea's position in negotiations with the Aisin Gurun (Jin Dynasty) in the aftermath of the Sarhū War of 1619. The Mission was successful in winning a favorable edict from the Ming emperor, while negotiations continued with the Jin Dynasty, indicating a flexible diplomatic attitude taken by Korea towards both the Ming and Jin in an attempt to secure its own national stability.

The author also points out that contrary to the conventional view, no domestic opposition was raised at that time when the Mission was sent, indicating a will on all sides to find points of compromise in determining foreign policy. It is also interesting that King Kwanghae chose such non-mainstream politicians (*sŏin* 西人) as I Chŏngkwi to lead his diplomatic missions, and

that diplomacy with the Ming and Jin Dynasties from 1620 on marked an increase in *sŏin* political participation, leading to their coup d'état of 1623 that invested In-jo 仁祖 as king.

Descriptions of the Bureaucracy during the Six Dynasties Period

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This article is an attempt to analyze the changes that occurred in how the bureaucracy was described in the documents of the Six Dynasties Period. The first description of the bureaucracy appearing in the official histories was made in "Bǎiguān Gōngqīng-Biǎo" 百官公卿表 of *Hàn Shū*. However, soon the document form *biǎo* 表 was replaced by the form called *zhì* 志 (viz. "BǎiGuān Zhì" 百官志). The forms *biǎo* and *zhì* differ in that the former consists of diagrams of bureaucratic organizations and lists of bureaucrats, while the latter describes only the way in which the bureaucratic system was organized.

The transition from *biǎo* to *zhì* meant that personal details about individual bureaucrats lost their significance in the dynastic record. On the other hand, documents in private sector published by groups of high officials concerning the bureaucracy increased. It was these documents that contained not only organizational diagrams, but also biographical details, regulations and provisions concerning appointments, qualifications, etc.

The removal of personal details from the dynastic record indicates the government's intention to describe its bureaucracy ideologically, rather than historically. In response, groups of high officials aimed to restore the personal details about their careers that were removed from official documents, in order to maintain the prestige that such facts accorded them and their families in Chinese society.