

**Requests for transfer of ships under suspicion
of violating Japan's prohibition of Christianity
and Joseon's relations with Qing China and Japan:
The Jesuit Infiltration Plots of 1642 and 43 and their aftermath**
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This article examines according to what information and for what reasons Japan attempted to set up a system for capturing suspicious foreign ships shipwrecked in Korean waters and the manner in which Joseon, which accepted the arrangement, implemented those transfer requests and disposed of the ships, within the context of its relations with Qing China and Japan.

After its prohibition of Christianity and in the aftermath of the Jesuit Infiltration Plots of 1642 and 43, Japan requested that in the case of any suspicious ships adrift in Korean waters, Joseon divert them to Japan House (J: Wakan/K: Waegwan 倭館) in Pusan for transfer to Japan. From testimony given by Jesuit missionaries apprehended in the Infiltration Plots, the Japanese authorities were cognizant of the possibility that more missionaries would launch similar attempts from Korean shores and were thus on the alert. In order to maintain friendly relations between the two countries, Joseon accepted Japan's request, replying that it would divert all suspicious vessels to Japan House.

The ships of Ming Dynasty subjects were frequently cast adrift upon Korean shores, and in the midst of the transition from the Ming to the Qing Dynasty, Joseon as a tributary of Qing was obligated to return Ming subjects to the Qing authorities, which opened the possibility that those people would be executed upon their arrival in Qing China. Upon the shipwreck of a Ming vessel in 1644, Joseon, which was thankful to the Ming Dynasty for defending her from Japanese invasion and felt obligated to help Ming subjects, tried to save the survivors by sending them to Japan under the pretense that they were possible Christian adherents. Pleased with Joseon's response, Japan requested that any

suspicious ships adrift in Korean waters would continue to be diverted to Japan House. However, when the next Ming shipwreck occurred, a Qing Dynasty envoy happened to be visiting Joseon, making it, impossible to transfer survivors to Japan without drawing the attention of the Qing envoy. On that occasion Joseon King Injo decided to confer with the envoy about how to deal with Ming survivors. Although the consultation did not take place due to the surrender of the Ming subjects to Qing authorities, Qing Dynasty, wary of the military alliance formed between the Ming Dynasty and Japan, forbade Joseon from sending Ming subjects to Japan.

At the same time, Joseon reported to the Qing Dynasty the fact of Japan's request for the diversion of suspicious ships, as well as the dispatch of Ming envoys to Japan in search of military assistance, emphasizing a Japanese threat to Qing security, all in the hope of gaining such concessions as exemptions from Qing-imposed rice and maritime corvee duties, the lifting of prohibitions on the building and repair of military fortifications and the resumption of army training. Although Joseon's plan was initially successful, upon the enthronement of Joseon King Hyojong, Qing China reprimanded Joseon for citing a Japanese threat as an excuse for remilitarization. Consequently, fearing the anger of Qing China, Joseon proceeded to return all shipwrecked Ming subjects (with some exceptions) to the Qing authorities. Nevertheless, the debate continued within Joseon on the strength of strong anti-Qing sentiment as to whether or not to send shipwrecked Ming subjects to Japan as suspected Christian adherents.