Opinions of famous officials - P'angye surok, chonje hurok, ha of the Yi dynasty on problems of govt

Famous Officials of the Dynasty Speak on the Problems of Government (Kukcho myǒnsin non p'yejông chejo-pu)

- Yulgok's discourses (Yulgok-non states: "Saving the people depends on reforming abuses (hyŏkp'ye). At the present time if you have one man who runs away (from his village), then relatives without fail (they) will encroach on his family and neighbors so that the family and neighbors will not be able to support themselves. They, too will be forced to take flight, so that again (the officials) will encroach upon (ch'im xihŏn kihŏn) the relatives' relatives and the neighbor's neighbors. When one man runs away, the harm extends to a thousand households.

(This) necessarily will go on until there are no people left at all, and only then will it stop. This is the reason why villages in the past that had a hundred families today do not have 10; and villages that in the past former years had 10 families now don't have one.

The towns and villages are deserted and there are no people left. There is no place is not like this. If this basis evil is not reformed (kyŏngjang), then the root of the country will be overturned and it will no longer be a state. If you want to eliminate this evil (abuse), you ought to send down orders to the districts of all areas to consult the (population) registers, and if there are any discontinued households (chŏrho) who have abandoned their villages, then immediately delete their names and do not make encroachments on their relatives or neighbors, and then what the state will lose will only be the person who has taken flight, and the people who have not yet scattered will be to some extent left in peace and security. If they enjoy and cultivate their livelihoods and if the population flourishes, then the unfilled military service quotas will also be filled at an early date.

Some might say that today half the military quotas are taken up.
with people registered as slaves and empty households (chŏrhomun: people who have absconded). If we adopt what you (Yulgok) say, then there will be no way to meet the needs right before our eyes (meet our immediate needs). What about that?

I (Yulgok) say that present customs are in every case like this, and this is why the nation in the end has no strength to rise (chin'gi). At the present time the difficulties of the living people are worse than if they were suspended upside down in mid-air. If we do not urgently (do something) to save the situation, we will have an empty country. And after the country is empty, how will we be able to provide for our immediate needs? This principle that is most correct.

The reason why (you) desire that there be no reductions in the quotas of soldiers (kun'ae); that is that (you believe) that these troops really exist and can be provided and used. But at the present time, with regard to the soldiers from the missing households (chŏrhomun), (they) only encroach upon their relatives to collect a cloth equivalent tax (kap'o), and that is all. If there should be an emergency requiring the soldiers to be called up, all the relatives (ilchok) carrying in the end would not be sufficient for transporting the spears, and the cloth payment (kap'o) would in the end not be sufficient for (paying for) the recruitment of other men. How can you be so stingy (in the use of) empty rosters (military service rosters) and thereby cause the people to suffer real harm? From ancient times to the present there really have been many cases of defeat in war, but I have never heard of a country being lost because of the evils of (illegal transfer of military service obligations) to relatives and neighbors. (I.E.: our country is about to be lost because of this problem, and if so, it would be unprecedented). I don't know when our country first began the practice of this evil. It is really a problem that
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they did not have a thousand years ago (in remote antiquity, ch'on'go).

We cannot allow later generations to hear about this. The shu (Book of History) says: Punishments do not extend to one's ancestors; rewards extend to (future?) generations.

The reason why the people are scattering about the country derives from the difficulty and suffering. We ought to extend benevolent (protection) to them without resting, but on the contrary, a cruel administrative system causes those people/who have not yet scattered (left their homes). How is this something that a humane man and a princely man (jen-jen, ch'un-tzu) could bear?

(Someone might) say that what you (Yulgok?) say is correct. It is only that people skillful at deception are all avoiding service and in the end the military service rosters do not have even one person (on them), so what about this? This is definitely no reason (for doing it).

(I say (to this that) there is definitely no reason for this to be. The reason why people leave their villages and relatives and turn into unsettled vagrants is all because they are hard pressed and have no other choice. Even if people were skillful at deception, if they had their productive occupations (san'op) and could sustain themselves, then who would be willing to choose the difficult life of a vagrant? Even did not have the worry of (extra levies on) relatives and neighbors (of those that had absconded) and only were responsible for the service due from one man (themselves), then the people could live in peace and enjoy their occupations, as much as if they had just escaped from a flood or fire. How would there be any reason for everybody to avoid service? Once this method is reformed, then we ought to order the districts to slowly to eliminate the idle able-bodied males (han'jang) and use them to fill up the empty slots in the military service quotas; and (have the district magistrates)
Yulgok on military service (opinions on problems of govt)

(district magistrates) abolish outside travel (yŏoe) in order to fill up the regular soldiers (chŏnggun). And when it comes to the newly established guard (units) that were not included in the law code (taejŏn), and the practice of listing names on the rosters of idle-men service (kimyŏng o hanyŏk chi chŏk), which is of no benefit to the public, then have these men eliminated and recruited into the army, and have the official in charge of military affairs take full charge of these matters. Once you get the true figures, then even though you do not establish a separate agency for (handling) the military registers, the military registers will have been completed. And only then can you again investigate the able-bodied males and when the time requires use them to fill in (slots for military service). Every year, order the local districts to forward the military rosters to the Ministry of War and the slave registers (yejŏk) to the appropriate bureau. Just record the true figures and cut out all "empty" (false) names. anybody who is able to 10 households or more of idle able-bodied males (put on the registers, where previously left off), cite him for an award. And if anybody should be responsible for new empty households (chŏrha--of those who have absconded) resulting in a reduction by 5 households or more from the figures in the register, then indict him for a crime, and either dismiss him or demote him. In serious cases give severe punishment. Where the increases and decreases match, don't bother inquiring. If after three years of administering (this system) there is no increase in the population, then also indict (the official) for crime. If this (system) is really put into practice, then the magistrates will fear the law (wibŏp) and devote all their mind to upholding it. In less than 10 years the people will be able to support themselves and the military quotas will be filled.
Yulgok on military services on page 86, 4:9a

In ancient times the King of Yueh (越王), Chu Chien (楚臣), with 5,000 troops camped for the night at Hui-chi (休基) (mountain); my one could say that he was very weak. (Note: He was defeated there by the king of Wu). But after 10 years of increasing population and 10 years of training, then he was able to enrich the state and strengthen the military (puguk kangbyŏng) and thereby destroy his enemies. How much more (applicable) is this in the case of our great state of 10,000 chariots. If we completely fulfill the way of increasing population and training them, then how would we not have a state at peace and people who are wealthy with great results from the change in customs and mores?

Yulgok also said: At the present time the various categories of service, such as regular soldiers (chŏnggun), support personnel (posol), najang, ch'oe (奴隸) and ch'ewŏn (奴隶), either serve on permanent tours of duty (changbŏn), or are divided into 2 tours (pŏn), or are divided into from 3 to as many as 6 or 7 tours. Either they can't stand the burden and take off like rats, or they somewhat are able to rest secure in their occupations and can support themselves together with their children. Why is it that some of the are troubled and others are happy, and (not all) have the same (lot)? The high officials at present who devise policy together with the appropriate bureaus should study and tailor (the system) by reducing the over-long service, and extended the too-short service and try to make it so that all service is equal and correct in (its distribution) of work and rest. If there are no evils of some having it too hard and others too easy, then those who have absconded will return and the people will not devote themselves to devising ways to escape service.
Yulgok on bribery

(opinions of famous officials of the Yi dynasty on problems of govt)

Yulgok said: Since the period of confusion from arbitrary and corrupt (use of authority) (kwŏn'gan tangnar (refers to what?)), those above and below have only made their business the collecting of bribes.

One does not get an official title unless he pays a bribe; lawsuits and disputes are not decided without bribes; people are not absolved of crime unless they pay a bribe, causing the officials and the clerks (are corrupt). When it is time to pay various goods to the officials, no distinction is made between quality and bad goods, no calculation is made of the amount, but only of the grade of bribe to be paid in taking or rejecting (the tribute offering). It gets to the point where if a clerk or one slave has the slightest jurisdiction, then immediately he seeks to make money from it or seize (property). It is not only this; important matters involving imprisonment and lawsuits are also entrusted to the hands of the wily clerks who take bribes and twist (the matter). This is really a plague that confuses government and will destroy the country. At the present time, if the corrupt people right have been gotten rid of, and if just speech has been gradually practiced at court, and there is some small reform of old practices, but the corrupt clerks compared to before are even worse. If you want to abolish this evil, then you should issue strict instructions to all the officials and explain clearly the laws on embezzlement, revive destroyed standards (?), purify the court, so that people will know and be warned; and only then can you prohibit all the practices of extortion and bribery, and (will you) reveal what is hidden and expose what is lying in hiding in order to get the (true) situation; and (will you be able to) allow people to petition their suits in order to investigate their grievances.

If you have a clerk or runner who takes a bribe or who extorts funds, and the matter is revealed, then for 1 p'il of cloth (taken in bribes or extorted)
Yulgo on bribery and extortion -2- P'angye surok, chonje hurokkha

or more, then punish the whole family (of the guilty party) and (exile) them to the Yukchin (6 garrison) area or an empty and remote place. Then not only will you wipe out the practice of bribery, but also you will assist the defense of the frontier (by shifting criminals out there for settlement). Even though you will be able to put a stop to the clerks demanding bribes, still you must provide them with funds in place of their cultivating the fields.

In ancient times the fu-shih(捕吏) and sŏrō(胥徒) all had regular salaries and looked up to their superiors for food. The clerks of the present time do not have any salaries in particular, and if they do not extort funds, then it is difficult for them to avoid starvation and cold. This is a feature of our country's institutions that is not yet complete (perfect).
(Yulgok) also said: What is known today as the so-called chinsang (進上) is not necessarily completely the same as royal tribute (sanggong 上供). Of the smallest items there are none which are not completely presented (to the throne). The products of land and water but there is not much (left) to are ferreted out until none are left, and they choose chinsang (進上) for presenting to the imperial cuisine 四供 (御膳). The but sage kings of ancient times believed that one man should rule the empire; they did not believe that the empire should support one man. Even though they had products presented (to the throne) in tribute, in every case it all was in accordance with (regular) Royal Tribute (sanggong). Also they were obliged to reduce (the amounts demanded) in order to give relief to the (burdens on) the people's labor. How much more so in the case of non-emergency needs which might do harm to the common people?

If you want to reform this evil, then you ought to order the chief officials and the appropriate bureaus to take up (investigate) all the categories of chinsang tribute, and study whether (the need for them) is urgent or not, and only take those things for royal tribute (sanggong) which are indispensable. As for the other unnecessary items, (the demands for them) should all be reduced or eliminated. Even in the case (of those articles) which are suitable as royal tribute, if there are too many categories of them, the quotas should also be reduced. If it is done like this then the benevolence of the sage kings' love for the people can be extended below (hagu 下究), and the correct tribute of Wen-wang (the cultured king of the Chou?) will not be the only beautiful system (that existed)? (puldul chŏnmi 不得專美)

Some might say that if you do as you say, then we will only know about loving the people, and will not know about supporting the king (ponsang 奉上). This is not the sincere (fulfillment of obligation) of the subject (to his king). I (Yulgok) say to this:
Alas! If customs at present are all like this, then this is the reason why we cannot look up to and supplement (give aid to) the virtue of the sages. A loyal subject loves his lord (king) by (following) the great way, and not by showing sincerity over small matters (sosong). If he can cause the state to be well governed and secure and the people wealthy and numerous, then what our king will obtain will be much. How could (worrying about) the increase or decrease of petty and small matters be sufficient to be of a benefit or disadvantage to our king? In ancient times Shun made a piece of lacquer ware and all the officials criticized this on the grounds that someone as noble as the Son of Heaven could not use lacquer ware. According to what you (Yulgok's critic) say, then the officials at Shun's court that they did not love their lord. However, Emperor Shun was a sage ruler over all the world, and his officials were good ministers (aides). Cockscrow! (鳴呼) How can you discuss the advantages and disadvantages (of sincerity, loyalty, any matter?) with men with commonplace mores?

(Yulgok) also said: the court of our ancestors severely prohibited the practice of pangnap(陟納). With regard to all kinds of tribute articles, they only had the common people pay them directly to the official bureaus, and the officials of the various bureaus also submitted them to the king (ponsang). The intention was not to allow the clerks to deceive (anybody), and they had no worry about squeeze (todung) and obstruction (of tribute payment? chogyok), and the common people had no difficulty with paying the tribute articles. But the way of the times (sed) gradually declined and evil practices grew by the day. Corrupt clerks and deceitful slaves privately obtained the various articles and they manipulated the officials for their private interest and obstructed the peasants (from paying tribute).
Even though they held goods of superior quality, in the end they held them back and did not pay them, but definitely paid the goods that they had privately acquired, and only then would they demand a price that was 100 times greater (than what they paid for them). The laws of the country were destroyed and it was not possible to prohibit them (from doing this). This went on for a long time, and hardly anything could be added to state finances, while among the people the looms are empty (the people are in want: igong chŏch'ŏk).

In recent times, even though it was desired to reform this, they still have not been able to obtain the essentials (do what is needed). It is only that they have allowed the common people to make payment themselves, but they have not established a suitable policy, and it has been a long time since the people have not been able to provide (tribute) themselves. One morning they hear of the evil of pangnap but without any plan to provide for payment (of tribute), and they are unable to avoid buying (the tribute articles) at high prices.

The (goods) have been stored away in deep recesses by them, and they force the prices up to double what they were in former days. Thus even though the name of pangnap has been abolished, the practice of pangnap in fact, on the contrary has become worse.

Some might say that if you want to reform this evil, you ought to come out with some kind of plan.

(Yulgok)

I say to this that when an accomplished man (tar'in) takes on some matter he makes a good plan and adjusts it to the circumstances. How would anybody who sticks to what is standard and old be able (to do it)? I(Yulgok) have seen the way the tribute articles (are paid) in Haeju. On every kyŏl of land they collect 1 tu of rice, and the official himself obtains the articles (buys them?) and pays them to the capital. All the people
Yulgok on tribute -4- P'angye surok, chônje hurok, ha

know is that they pay a rice (tax), and that is all. The evils of squeeze (todungi) are not heard of. This is really a good method for saving the people today. If this method is spread to the four quarters, then the evil of pangnap will be reformed by itself in less than a day.

Some might also say that P'ang in fact the districts in our country are not like Haeju. How would it be possible to carry out in all the districts of the eight provinces what is done in Haeju? I (Yulgok) say to this that if there is no change in the standard regulations, then what you say is true. But if you have the important officials and appropriate bureaus take all the charts and registers (tojok) from the eight provinces and study the quantity of people and goods and how much land there is, and whether there are many or few local products, and then again levy a tax on tribute products, and perhaps And if you calculate what is appropriate and reduce tribute equalize the burdens up to the point where tribute does not cut into must state finances, P'ang youaj will definitely enable the districts of the 8 provinces to provide for the payment (of tribute), and have ever place like Haeju where land is taxed at the rate of 1 tu/kyol. Only then should you promulgate this order, and if so, then how would there be an place (reason why) it could not be carried out?
Yulgok on fealty

F'angye surok, chönje hurok, ha

Yulgok also reported to Sŏnjo saying: The courts of our ancestral (kings) were extremely simple (yak) in their expenditures, and extremely mild (cheap) in what they took from the people.

Since the middle of Yŏnsan's reign, (royal) expenditures have expanded and become extravagant, and regular tribute (offerings) are not sufficient to provide for their needs. Therefore additional (tribute) requirements were set in order to fulfill their desires. Stories (about this) I, in past days, heard various, but I was old and did not dare to put deep faith (in the stories). Formerly when I was in the Royal Secretariat I picked up the tribute rosters (kong'an) of the Ministry of Taxation and looked at them, and I saw that the various kinds of tribute were all items that were added on (kajong) in year period sinyu year of the Hung-chih (Hongchi): i.e., 1501, and they have been respected and used up to the present. When I determined the period, (if found) that it was during Yŏnsan's reign.

Without realizing it I closed the book and uttered a great sigh, and said (to myself), "The 1501 is 74 years (before) the present time (hence, he's writing in 1575!) when we have a sage ruler on the throne, but how is it that this law has not been reformed (abolished)?"

When I search for the reason for it, (I find that) during the past 70 years in every case (in everything) there are kwŏn'gan: arbitrary and corrupt officials) who have been in control of the country. Even though two or three princely man (kunja) might perhaps have been established at court, their will (intentions) could not be set forth (spread out, extended: chŏn), and Strange calamities had to follow, so what time was there for any discussion on this (problem)?

But did it necessarily have to wait for the present day (to be resolved)?

Moreover, the products that are produced perhaps change in accordance with the times; people, goods, and land increase or decrease with the times.
At the present time in many cases the tribute required from the districts are not what is produced there. It is like climbing a tree to catch a fish. They cannot avoid buying the goods from other districts or buying them from the merchants in the capital and spending 100 times (the cost, value). There is not enough for official expenditures, and furthermore the population is gradually shrinking; the land is gradually being ruined, so that (the tribute) that in previous years was paid by 100 persons, last year was the responsibility of 10 people. And what 10 people paid last year, now 1 person has to take responsibility for it this year. This situation will end up where there is not one person left before it will stop.

At present what I am saying extends to the reform of the tribute register (kong'an), those who deliberate (on this matter) will definitely argue (lay the blame on others) that its the law of our ancestors and it cannot be changed lightly. Yet even though it is the law of our ancestors, when the people are as in extreme difficulty as this, you have no choice but to change (the law), and how much more so considering it was a law (promulgated by) Yōnsan(gun)?

I humbly hope that the throne will choose men of intelligence who are clear (well versed) in affairs and give them exclusive charge over this matter and put the Taesin (high officials) in command of them, and eliminate all of the additional tribute levies established by Yōnsan(gun) in order to restore the old system of our ancestors. (Also) if a study is made of the products of the districts, how much land there is, how great the population, and changes (shifts) are made in calculating and determining (the tribute required) so that it is made equal and fair and uniform, then it will be like saving the people from a precarious situation (hanging upside down).
Yulgok on tribute  -7- Ch'angye surok, ch'ŏnje hurok, ha

Yulgok, when he was the governor of Hwanghae, submitted a memorial (changgye 승계) which said: Chinsang (royal tribute) is disturbing the whole province. The poor people (have to) go hunting in the mountains and fishing in the rivers (to obtain the tribute leisure time products) and have no time left over. If they are given land, it gets overgrown and is not cultivated. If their houses are run down (destroyed), they don't repair them. (They) are knocked over (upset) and have to leave (their homes and scatter) and they have no place to live. If (the tribute required) is not a product of a given locality, then the taxes are forced from them (tuhoe? kiryŏn) and they have to buy the goods from distant areas and expend in effort (labor) 10 times (what should be required). In the extreme (case?) it is like sealing up? (pong 封) ajang(牙獐) deer? and pojang(男獐 big deer?). You capture the deer and tie them up, but they are not ajang nor pojang, so then you cannot stop the hunt. (?) In my opinion it is like presenting everyday medicine (yag'i 薬師) as tribute. It should be presented to the Physicians' Bureau (Usa 허사); it should not be presented to the official (royal?) cook (ong'in 종인). It is the same with deer. But you have to seek out the ajang and pojang ሁ (special kinds of deer). I really do not understand the principle behind this.

It is also like (the problem of) deer tongues and deer tails (nokhwal, nongmi 男舌, 尾). If they are not the best tasting (kinds), they are not suitable for presenting to the king. But all are purchased in the capital with cloth and are obtained in quantity by the noble (kwigŭn chi ka貴近之家) families, and the prices (of them) are very expensive. Once something becomes a tribute item, it is presented (paid) over and over again in endless repetition (chain of causation).

And the property of the people is extracted from them (junmin kot'aek 準民抄錄) and is regarded as something which the noble and near (close relatives of king?-- kwigŭn 高近) can round up (exploit) for profit,
and that is all there is to it. If you think how the situation has come to this, it may be permissible to do it in the up (adm. towns). (Meaning unclear.) Moreover, the distance between this province and the capital (kyōngsŏng) is several days journey, and when it is warm it also presents living products (saengmul) (to the throne). Things prepared in the morning are presented as tribute (pong) in the evening. During the spring and summer, there would definitely be a change in the color and taste (of such products, due to time of transport), so it is necessary to prepare them in advance and set them aside in an ice house (nŭng'ŭm) for several days before sending them to officials in the city (tohoegwan). Therefore (the goods) have lost a lot of their nature already by the time they are pong presented as tribute (pong). How much more so in the case of goods that have to be sent to the capital (kyōngsŏng) from several hundred li away? If preparing (tribute food items) which spoil and become rotten is regarded as disrespectful (to the throne), then the situation most of is unavoidable that the temporary warehouse clerks (ch'angsol) cannot handle it, and if you blame people for things they cannot do and punish them for it, how could that be the government of a sage king? In cases where (tribute items) are sealed and presented (pongjin) from x several days before and there is no problem, it is only because they have bribed the clerks of the Royal Cuisine; it is not a question of the products not spoiling (there being no change in color and taste). It is my humble hope that the king, out of concern for the suffering of the people, give thought to making reductions in the quotas of live deer and pork. Even if (the quota were) reduced by 5-6 head, the royal beneficence extending to the people would be great. As for the ajang and pojang, it is not necessary to have separate categories (for these species of deer?), but just to specify "live deer" (saengjang), which will be
p.89, 4:14b

Presented as tribute (pongjin) as they are caught. If so, they there can be some slight relief from the difficulties of the hunt.

p.90, 4:15a

As for deer tails and deer tongues, if they are all abolished (from the tribute quotas) as we know they don’t taste good (anyway), and this would give some slight relief from the difficulties of buying (those items) from distant places at higher prices.

If this province were required to present live (perishable) goods only between the 10th and 2nd months (winter), while in the period from the third to 9th months, live (perishable) goods from this province would be exchanged for dried goods (foods) in the Kyŏnggi area, then it would suit the culinary needs of the king while the local districts would avoid extremely difficult responsibilities. These few items would be as easy for the sage king in his bright intelligence to do as turning over his hand... (etc. people would benefit and it would be fortunate for making strong the foundations of the country--pangbon)

--- Cho Chung-bong(趙重楨) went to China as an envoy and returned home. He submitted a memorial to Sŏnjo which stated: I heard that what the Chinese imperial court uses for cuisine is all obtained from the people’s taxes (minbu). Silver is collected and the Chief of the Imperial Cuisine Agency (Sangsŏn’gam t’aegam) pays out silver every day in order to buy food from the marketplace, and the kamim (low culinary official) presents it. (End of quote)

China is a country that has large land area, and many people and horses, and it also has river (and canal) grain transport facilities. The idea behind their providing that rare delicacies from the mountainous areas and seas that must be recently gathered be purchased with tax silver in the marketplace is because their sage emperors of the past felt that if they were to require live products (perishables),
then the labor required to transport it a thousand or ten thousand li would be greater than the expense of water transport, and in calculating the costs in silver liang, what would take 600 horses to transport could be transported by one horse. Once this law was enacted, the people were no longer bothered with multiple costs (contributions), and the horse-transport stations were not burdened with excessive transport (costs).

Meanwhile the shops in the marketplace had all sorts of goods that could be bought with silver at prevailing prices, and there was nothing lacking in the (needs of) the royal cuisine. This is the reason why the people of the Central Plain (chungwón--China) get richer by the day and the foundations for a Great Peace (t'aep'yǒng) are firm and strong.

The people in our country, in addition to regular tribute (sanggong), also have to make payments of chinsangmulso (進上物膳) which they purchase. If the resentment of the people is extremely great, it is of concern to the (welfare of) the state, (so much so) that I cannot describe it all. The king should not consider this a minor matter and neglect it. For one matter to cause the multitude of the people to lose their sincerity (sincere respect for the king) is not something which he I can bear to sit by and see without doing something to save the situation.

With regard to the payment of items for the royal cuisine, in some cases items that were produced in the past no longer are produced. But (the officials) do not ask whether the item exists or not, but demand that all of them be paid provided for, just barely securing a surplus for the people day and night, who had to purchase things from a distance at double the price. A fish at several days journey may not have been worth more than a few sung of rice near one's own home territory, but if you had to get it from people living in distant places, then it could not be bought for less than 4-5 tu. And if you couldn't provide the costs for hired labor, you had no choice but to hire land (rent land) in order to pay the costs. In the case of a local produce like the Kyôngju ch'ŏn'ŏ
Yulgok on tribute  -ll- P'angye surok, chŏnje hurok, ha

(hickory shad, gizzard shad), it would cost 1 p'il of silk in exchange. Or
the Pyongyang tongsu-o cost 1 p'il of chŏngp'o (正布 : pure cotton).

If the cost of 7 tribute items of all adm. districts is like this, what
limit is there to it? And how much worse when at the time (the goods are)
transported, the costs for feeding the clerks and paying bribes to the
capital clerks all are paid by the people. And if it is not a severe
winter, then accordingly? ice is loaded heavily(on the horses), and if
there are no horses with strong backs, then the cost for using post-station
horses is ンマシマノノハナク made by by using the people's oxen. Furthermore,
the costs of providing for the expenses of large and small official missions
as they pass through the post stations of the provinces, and the comings and
goings of the Wae (Japanese) and Manchus (yain), also cannot be paid for,
and nine out of 10 houses are empty. How will the state be able to pass on
its life to a later day?

In 今 studying the Yu-kung(禹貢 : HHDSJ p.1114, section of the
Shu-ching on ancient geography dealing with geog. and products of the 9
chou of China), (places like?) Ch'eng-hsü and? (青徐) were all
seacoast areas, but there was only the sea tribute? ンマシマノノハナク
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This is what 今 a sage government out to put first in its considerations.

The fresh fish and fowl presented as tribute by the people of Kyŏnggi
are a great burden on them. I heard from a very old person that in fact
at the beginning of the dynasty this (tribute) was not required.
The Changhon taewang ordered that for the people along the water (coast), every 300 households would (take turns) in rotation providing fish only three times (a year?). At that time the price of fish was extremely high, and there was not (enough?) rice set aside (to pay for it?).

In the last years of the reign of the K'ang-ch'ing tai-wang (the last ruler of the Southern Sung, 1126-27) Son Sun-hyo was Kamsa (governor) at the time that an envoy arrived from China, and fearing that a prolonged stay (by the envoy) would require the levying of fish and fowl from the people, he made preparations in advance to provide for his welcome. But on the envoy's rapid return there was no fish to be used, so daily he would send a list to the Saongwŏn (Office of Royal Cuisine). When (the supplies) were about to run out, Son Sun-hyo felt that the (responsibility?) for (meeting) the urgent daily needs ought to rest with him, and he subsequently levied a second levy on the people to present as tribute. Those who succeeded to Sun-hyo regarded him as a superior official and did not dare to abolish (this precedent, and it subsequently became an old regulation that has lasted down to our own time, so that the cost of (providing) fish has gradually become heavy, so that (the production from) 4 kyŏl (of land?) is fixed as the cost of 1 fish. If 4 kyŏl is not sufficient for providing the cost, then 8 kyŏl is set aside, and on each kyŏl (a tribute tax) of 2 tu is levied, making a total of 16 tu of rice in order to purchase 1 fish. I do not know how much fish is presented as tribute daily to the four palaces (sajŏn), so I do not know how many multiples of 16 tu are paid from each district for providing (for the fish).
Generally, 16 tu would feed a poor family of 8-9 persons for one month. Each kyŏl produces 2 tu. This appears to be an extremely small amount and when it gets to the spring and summer (planting season) when the old grain is all used up, there is no way to (even) request loans. And the clerks dun them for payment, which they cannot make, so they tie them up and put them in jail. When you see this situation where the naked people and their starving wives cut their own hair (??), bow their heads, shout out and find it hard to manage, then how could the sage ruler's pitying (compassionate) feelings endure to hear the resentments of the mass of the people poured out before him? The lack of restraint on the offering of rank-smelling food (meat) (presented to the throne) and the daily costs of this is equivalent to what several dozen poor households can live on for half a year. It is definitely not the just tribute (levied under) Wen Wang.

I would like the king to simply remain with the fish levy on 300 households of Changhŏn taewang, and to order the abolition of all the levies imposed under (Son) Sun-hyo. (If that were done), then the people of Kyŏnggi would obtain some small relief.

Hyojong

When Emperor Hsiao-tsung (Hsiao-tsung huang-ti--has to be Chinese emp.) first ascended the throne he ordered the reduction of daily consumption of the emperor to one sheep and one chicken, His reform of the regulations for tribute sheep and chickens shows that there is indeed a precedent established. Since Hyojong was afraid that the royal cuisine might be too extravagant while the old and the sick people might not have enough to eat, for a son to change his father ('s laws) would not do harm (to the principle of) filial piety. (Seems to be saying that since Hyojong established a precedent later changed by the evolution of a bad tribute system, for the present king to change the law back to Hyojong's reform would not be an unfilial act w. respect to ancestors)
The faulty institution of the royal cuisine in our dynasty began with flattering and fawning officials, and the evil has extended to the ten thousand names like this. How much worse was it during the wild and lewd times of Yonsan when the hundred varieties of royal tribute (cinsang) was all increased (in quotas)? The previous fall, Yi I (Yulgok) spoke on this, but in the end the king did not give his permission (to his suggestions for reform). This may not be the best time, but I would like that the unauthorized (corrupt) levels of the magistrates be prohibited, but is this not, indeed, difficult? That is the reason why edicts issued for simplification (lightening) of the taxes of food and drink have been passed down for years to the shops, but the people have not received the benefit (from them).

Ch'oe Chun-hong

(Yulgok) also said: I saw the Amnok region (river region), and from the river West to Sunch'on, if it was not rocky mountains and barren plains, then there was no place that was not cultivated. The towns, colonies, districts and villages (were so close that) the chickens and dogs in each could hear the other, and the oxen, horses, pigs, and sheeps were restrained (corralled?) in the mountain fields. The boys and girls of the families clean and pure (samgu) gathered in groups, and each (family) lived securely whether rich or poor. The people of Yongpyong and Spju were the most prosperous. As for Chesong and Woni (Wölli) (seems to be saying the earth is worn out and is without grass in this region?) At present with things like this, the heavenly court is deeply concerned about it. It realizes that the firm foundation of the country is to be found in the security of the people. That is why if the people are nurtured in security, there is nothing that is not lacking for use, and in the extreme case, even the officials (magistrates) receive monthly salaries in silver and cash with which they buy goods from the marketplace.
And they do not dare collect even 1 chicken or 1 foot of cloth from the people. So that outside of the regular land tax (chǒnbu) and personal service tax (sinyŏk), there are no other miscellaneous labor service levels. Even the greedy magistrates do not dare transgress the law to exploit the people. Therefore the people flourish and the land is productive.

It's a sad thing that in our eastern area from Yanggae (two 界) to the Tumen (river?) that much of the fertile plains and fields (in this area) is not cultivated. People lived there in the past, but in the present, it is overrun with weeds. No more than 10 or 20 percent of the houses have a single ox or horse, and it is also an extremely rare household that has several children. How is it that the living things of the earth are particularly insufficient in this corner of the sea?

In general, evil laws have long been in existence, and there are all kinds of unauthorized, arbitrary levies (on the people). A cloth tax to the tune of 3 p'il on 8 kyoľ of land/is transported yearly, and a pongjok (军事 : military personnel levy) in the sum of 5 p'il is paid by the year. For the encouragement of agriculture, the clerks and officials form the households into large and small t'ong (groups) for work six times a month, and if there should be a vacancy (somebody missing), they punish (the people) with a cloth levy. Once a month the people are required to serve as officials clerks (kwansok ), and if someone fails to show up, his is punished with a cloth levy. For a family's labor service, (the officials) don't ask if the person lives near or far (from the work), or the looms being completely empty (exorbitant?). Would a newly made suit of clothes leisurely regard a child's quilt? (What's this mean?) That is why children go cold and cannot be protected. Official taxes and
private debts cannot be managed, and one tu's worth of taxes might
call forth 4 tu (in payments). When 4 tu is transported from a remote
area to the granary, then the amount (cost) is quadrupled. Payments for
milling (yongjong 善正 ) come to 8 tu per year. The cost of tribute
pheasants and deer comes to 5 tu per household. When the larder is
bare (? 瓶果聲 ) and there is nothing with which to finish out
(close) the year, then people 吳sell off their oxen and calves,
but still find it difficult to continue (to get along). This is why
the people are starving and cannot support themselves. Cockscrew!
If you have an ox, it should be used for the spring planting, but at
present they are sold off in order to feed the young. They should be
used to nurture people as they approach old age, but they also are
starving and dying and in need of relief. There is no man who wants
to die early (rapidly). (??)

Furthermore, when there is a vacancy in the military or people run
off (to become) slaves, their neighbors are rounded up and put in jail.
This is the reason why lots of good land (goes to waste? is not cul-
pulhagye 不暇計 ), and people grab their gourds and abscond
to faraway places.

Moreover the cloth tribute (chinsang) revenues from Hamgyŏng
province do not amount as much as 100 p'il, and within the province, there are
and a tax of 1 sok per year on salt flats
regular levies of fine cloth (to provide expenses for) minor food costs
for officials (kusik kwanch'ae 荷金官債 )
which is sufficient for extra expenditures. And (the above?) yields a yearly amount of 4 sok. In addition there
salt
is a levy of 4 rolls of paper (so that) the families have not been able
to make ends meet and (as a result) destroyed their salt flats and
the flats have been in ruins for a long time; yet in accordance with
registers (regulations) the collection of these taxes has been
passed down as a service tax from our forefathers. When the northern provinces
were first established, there were few families (living) in the plains and many trees in the mountains, and local products (of) sable pelts were presented as tribute (chinsang). At the present time sables have long been extinct, but this tribute is still preserved and there is no other place to get them from and the cost of purchasing them in the capital has doubled. There is no worse affliction in the area than this. And how could the resentment of the people of other provinces be limited to this? The fact that people are abandoning their homes by the day is truly because of the fact that these various evils (evil tribute levies) have not been done away with.

Cockscrow! The matter of tribute (Chinsang) and the ample offerings (trib?) (paid to) officials in all the district towns has led the common people to lose their places (suffer loss) and to the destruction of the country. If those on high really understand how the people have scattered and how the country cannot be preserved, then they would first eliminate these unessential tribute (rements), And as for such things as the additional tribute levies of Yonsan(gun), abolish all of them, and also warn the magistrates not to dare to rely on harming the people; that with regard to usual tribute and taxes, they should stop with collecting the original quotas (amounts) and not dare to add on heavy levies; that with regard to goods for supporting their yamen, these should be fixed in standard quotas; and that levies to take care of envoys) should also be in accordance with fixed quantities; that with regard to rice and cloth, they should not make arbitrary collections from the people. And if there should be any (officials) who violate this, they should be punished for the crime of embezzlement, or transported to the frontier walled fortresses.

Also, with regard to living resources (like seals, animals etc?) (the officials) should not
Also with regard to the source of living things (beings), they should not be allowed to die out because of idleness (in idleness). It is a crime for a grown women not to be married. Men should not allowed to be idle and women resentful (out of lack of a husband?). If in a hundred years people are born and raised, and each as a secure place to live, then within the eight provinces there will be no idle and empty places, and things will proper without expecting it.

-Yulgok also said: I have heard that in China, the clerks of the capital agencies and district yamen in the provinces down to the clerks of the local districts—all who look up to (serve) the officials, such as the gate guards, painters, petty functionaries, and jailers—there are none who do not receive monthly salaries (Note: 2 1/2 liang of silver). If one man works for an official (is in an office), then even though he has 4-5 family members, none of them have assigned labor service. (end of quote) This truly accomplishes (carries out) the intention of the Chou (dynasty?) (with regard to) various clerks (書史, 郎吏, 隸人等), and others, they do not leave the official yamen any day and their burdens are extremely great, but they are not provided with even one copper nor do they have the time for cultivation. Nor can they become artisans or engage in commerce. They do not have the wherewithal for their food or clothing. They don't have the free time to become bandits, nor do they have the leisure to beg. This is the reason why they deceive the officials with their wily tricks, (threaten?) the people and demand their property.
cut off (cut out) (pages from?) the account ledgers and steal goods
(from official warehouses?), enter the granaries and steal millet, and not
be concerned about honesty or shame. If 与重刑 with severe
punishments and strict laws you stop these evils, then 取犯者 与重刑
over the 100 manifestations of their corrupt plans.

Would it not be better to provide them with the resources of food and
clothing, teach them honesty and shame, so that they 与重刑
would not commit (these acts)! on their own?

Some knowledgeable men might say that the finances of the country
have been used up, and it is difficult to obtain much goods and grain
to divide up among the numerous clerks for their expenses. (But) in
my humble opinion, I don't know how many and what kind of instances there
are where the numerous clerks, unable to obtain income, have devised
cheat the country many corrupt strategies in order to lead the country into error (携国).
Nor do I know how many times and in what quantity they have stolen state
property; nor do I know how often and how much of the property of the
kunmin (军民 :people) they have destroyed. It would be better to divide
up what they have stolen and equally among them as their salaries and
not allow them to deceive the nation and harm the people. Then if there were
those who broke the law, 与重刑 those above (the king?) would have
reason to arrest them, while they would admit to their crimes themselves.

The Hung-fan (洪範) says: 凡正能既富方袁 傷其偽覬
之切要而望其奸弊之不作 雖使腐陃執法無所施

Even upright men should be given enough grain so that they do
not suffer from starvation and cold, in the hopes that they will not be
corrupt, for even sage officials who uphold the law would not be able
to act (in an upright fashion without sustenance). (?)
At the present time, there are a large number of those who consume food unnecessarily (superfluous expenditures?). In addition, costs for paper (stationery?) for the tribute products of the various bureaus (in the capital), and cloth taken as fines for officials in the provinces have been collected and are stored. But they perform no other function than as material (funds for the support or use) of the officials and their friends, and that is all. These are indeed public goods (property). If you calculate them all together and cut down on what should not be spent, and only use what should be spent, then the clerks of those offices would have no fear that they would not have enough food (income, salaries).

Furthermore, in the district towns of the outer provinces, if you should have an original grain fund of 10,000 sŏk, then the pimo (expense surcharge) would be as much as 1,000 sŏk. Every year, 400 sŏk is stored against unexpected needs. 600 sŏk could be divided among 50 people to provide a year's salary. (Note, 1 sŏk as monthly salary, of unhusked grain, per person). How much more (would this be so) in a territory of 100,000 sŏk, where the pimo (expense surcharge) comes to 10,000 sŏk. Every year, you could give out 6,000 sŏk, which could pay (the salaries for) 500 people. (But at the present time) this is not recorded in the ledgers; it is only used for the private expenditures of the magistrates. How could this be the mind (intention) of Heaven, to get some of the people's grain in order to fulfill one person's private desires and cause a lot of people to starve and freeze?

As for the system in China, like the Li-pu ta-ch'u, san tang-shang, chua-ch'i (礼部大廈三堂上祭祀之所), these are limited to 9 clerks. With regard to ceremonies and sacrificial rites, the Four Bureaus (ssu-ssu 四司) each have 9 men, while the clerks of the provincial district towns ought to be reduced (to a figure lower than) this.
Because of the large number of people and the complexity of affairs in China, those who high officials use as their servants (underlings) are limited to those on service duty for specific jobs. They do not dare take (even) one clerk (along) to dazzle the eyes of those in the marketplace and alleyways. Both capital and provincial officials really like flattery. What one clerk can handle they divide up among three or four clerks. It only increases the commotion, while the matter is really not taken care of. When they go out, the streets must be filled with flatterers, who they order about on small jobs (places) and who praise them on everything.

Cockscrow! They commit the excess (mistake) of extravagance (luxury) and make mistakes in all affairs. With things like this, we really should adopt the Chinese system and first reduce the number of clerks in the six ministries, and reduce the clerks at the bureaus and the provincial districts and establish quotas. If we have a surplus, then when there is a vacancy, transfer a clerk (from another place) to fill it in and give salaries to those people on the job responsible for affairs. Then they will have something to eat, and government expenditures will be extremely equitable (equal). The clerks will take delight in their tasks, and public affairs will also be pure (without corruption).

Someone asked Yulgok: You think that saving the people depends on reforming evils. At the present time what problems cause the people the most trouble?

Yulgok said: The first is the evil of requiring family members and neighbors (to make up the tax and service obligations of others in default) (ilchok pagnin chi p'ye). The second is the bothersome and burdensome tribute payments (chinsang).
The third is the middle-man system of tribute payments (kongmul pangnap). The fourth is inequality in (the distribution of) labor service (yŏksa pulkyun). The fifth is the extortion of the clerks (petty officials, isŏ).

These are the ones that are particularly bad, but how would it be that the evils of the present time stop only at this (are only these)? (How would these be the only evils that exist at present?) There has been no resurvey of the land, and fallow and uncultivated wasteland is still subject to taxation. Buddhism (sŏkkyo) still exists and vagrants do not return to their fields. Unexpected (emergency) needs are all handled by merchants (siin), but the merchants are in danger of imminent calamity. Demands for arbitrary exactions go around (circulate) to inside the pang (pangnae), and when the marrow of the pangnae has been used up, then nameless taxes are levied in excess in the district towns (adm. districts), and the exactions are on the contrary heavier than the regular taxes. (kongbu)

The law of matrilineal determination of status (of offspring of mixed slave and commoner marriages) (chongmo chi pŏ) is not applied to commoner women (must mean, that when the child's mother is a commoner, the child is not regarded as a commoner as it is supposed to be, but is kept as a slave), and (as a result) commoners have completely been changed into private slaves (sach'ŏn).

Supernumerary officials are extremely numerous and "floating" (unnecessary) expenditures are quite extensive. The people's households are gradually shrinking, but the kun and hyŏn (adm. districts) are very numerous.

So if you want to talk about the evils of the present age, there isn't enough time in the day to do so. If present conditions are not changed, then even with a Yao or Shun at the top (on the throne), with a Kao or a (serving under them, it still would be of no benefit for bringing order to confusion in today's gov't.
In a few years' time, the people will become rotten at the core, and the land will be in ruin. This should be of great concern. At the present time the people are like dangling before death and are running out of breath. They work all day but cannot support themselves. If there should be some alarm from abroad (news of an invasion?) in the south or north, the enemy would be like a fierce wind sweeping through fallen leaves. What do the people and the ancestral shrines have to rely on? When I think (and talk) of this, without realizing it, I shudder and cry.

I submit (another must be Yu Hyŏng'won commenting on Yulgok?) that we have seen here in brief form what the evils of the present day are. If you would want to discuss them in detail, the day would not be long enough (there wouldn't be enough days). Nevertheless, in all affairs there are those things which are fundamental, and those which are nonessential. If you take care of the fundamentals, the nonessentials will rectify themselves. (For example), once a land system is put into practice and military service requirements are based on land (allotments), then the evil practice of forcing neighbors and relatives (to assume labor service requirements levied on individuals who have absconded) will disappear without having to take action to eliminate it.

Once the taedong system is applied equally throughout the country and standard yearly quotas to meet the king's needs are determined, then the evil of the royal tribute (chinsang kongmul) will be reformed without having to do more about it.

If you calculate the number of jobs and fix the number of clerks, everyone will have a job to do and a salary (to go with it), and then the evils of the unequal distribution of labor service (as clerks) and the exactions of the petty clerks (to provide for their sustenance in lieu of salaries) will be eliminated without having to do more about it.
If the production of the people is made equal and taxes and labor service is uniform (minsan i kyun, puse i il) and there are no extra levies and arbitrary exactions (on the people), then nothing more will have to be done to sustain the lives of the people and make them prosperous.

Only if things are done like this can you issue government edicts and achieve good government. If they are not done like this, then even if you wanted to achieve humane government (injöng, jen-cheng), it would only be empty talk. But even though this is the method for governing, laws cannot be administered by themselves. The ruler should first obtain worthy officials and put them at his left and right (side), search far and wide for talented men and distribute them among the ranks of officials (söwi). Only then (can his orders) be carried out. Choosing the great officials (taesin) basically depends on clarifying the virtue of one (all) minds. (ilsim) And the essentials for clarifying the mind are only (all) (to be found) in the sage teachings. In general, are makingx laws ix like an artisan's marking line and rule, like a tinsmith's mold. ixixix line and ruler are not (true) lines and rulers, and ixixix a so-called mold is not a (true) mold, then even the best artisans in the empire cannot make a one-xikan (roomed) house or a single utensil. The world only xixix talks about good artisans and says it is not necessary to use lines, rulers and molds, but this is an extremely erroneous idea.