example, she could have questioned why Shiga sought to make sense of the conundrums of human life in the natural world of flora and fauna rather than in the world of human nature. Moreover, although Guo points out that Shiga's awe-inspiring literary account of sublime nature alludes to a real experience from 1914, the text itself was produced in 1937, a point in Japanese history when Japan was heavily involved in military conquest in mainland Asia. I do not for one moment suggest that the work of a great writer such as Shiga can be reduced entirely to its historical context, but how can such a scene be read without at least some allusion to the broader circumstances of the times?

I do not wish to sound too negative here. After all, no book can cover all the points, and every reader brings along their own set of expectations that can never be satisfied. The fact is that Guo's book provides a fascinating new angle from which to explore and come to a deeper understanding of one of Japan's most important modern authors. Guo is to be thanked for all the research and thought that has gone into this work, which will be welcomed by all readers with an interest in Shiga Naoya and the Japanese relationship with nature.

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JAHYUN KIM HABOUSH AND KENNETH R. ROBINSON (ed. and trans.):
A Korean War Captive in Japan, 1597–1600. The Writings of Kang Hang.
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The *Kanyangnok* (The Record of a Shepherd) is one of the most important texts on the Imjin War (1592–98) when the troops of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–98) invaded Korea in their quest for conquering China. Its author is Kang Hang (1567–1618), a scholar and official who was captured during the war by the Japanese and spent some three years (1597–1600) as a captive in Japan.

This work, translated and annotated by JaHyun Kim Haboush and Kenneth Robinson, is a very welcome addition to the growing literature on Korean–Japanese relations in general and the Imjin War in particular.

The work deserves close attention due to its author's special standing within Korean society and the Chosŏn administration. Kang Hang, a fifth-generation descendant of the famous Kang Hŭi-maeng (1424–83) – high official, outstanding scholar, painter and calligrapher – and himself a graduate of the civil service examinations of 1593 and official, possessed an especially acute sense of Korea's Confucian civilizatory achievements, and therefore, when in Japan, was horrified by the "barbarian" Japanese manners and customs. Nevertheless, in his second place of confinement, Fushimi (near Kyoto), he met Fujiwara Seika (1561–1619), an early scholar of Neo-Confucianism, with whom he conducted philosophical discourses. Indeed, it is believed that Kang introduced to him the works of T'oegye Yi Hwang (1501–70) and thus contributed to the emergence of a Neo-Confucian school in Edo Japan. After his return from Japan, Kang, plagued by feelings of guilt for having failed his king, never assumed office again. Instead, he devoted himself to teaching an ever-greater number of students.

Kang's work consists of several pieces he brought back from Japan, which were later edited and compiled by his former students into a cohesive book. The first, "Encounters with the Adversities of War", is a kind of memoir in which Kang recalls the horrors of war, details the events surrounding his and his family's capture, and his many attempts to escape and return home. Although as an official he enjoyed certain privileges, he is torn by his feelings of guilt for having been captured and repeats his affirmations of loyalty towards his king (King Sŏnjo, r. 1567–1608) in ever more intense self-accusatory exclamations. This piece reveals Kang's agony at being confronted with a strange and "barbarous" culture, while longing for home. "An exhortation to Koreans still held prisoner in Japan" is directed at his fellow countrymen and is "a rousing anti-Japanese and anti-barbarian piece" (p. xv) that sets the prisoners off as a community upholding values of humanity and peace. In the third section, "A report to the royal secretariat on Japanese social practices", the only piece Kang wrote after returning to Korea, he narrates his voyage back to Korea, gives details of high-placed Japanese personalities, and describes Japanese customs – from architecture and social institutions to religious practices. By far the most elaborate account is "A memorial sent from captivity", which Kang sent to King Sŏnjo while still in Japan. It includes a number of separate pieces of information he had collected or secretly copied for the benefit of the king and his ministers. It is "a tour de force display of the Confucian rhetoric of loyalty" (p. xvii). Its three appendices, moreover, contain characterizations of the Japanese leadership, detailed assessments of military matters, and puts forward suggestions for reforms of the Chosŏn military.

This latter text is not only amazing for the extent to which Kang was able to gather intelligence from such informants as Buddhist monks, Japanese sympathizers and Korean translators. Equally remarkable is Kang's assessment of the failure of the Chosŏn's military in their encounters with the Japanese enemy. In frank words he castigates the laxness of the Korean military organization, the lack of weapons and training, and the erratic personnel policy – all factors that in his view hampered the Chosŏn response to the Japanese onslaught. He therefore added a number of suggestions for military reform and war strategies. Kang also provides a meticulous assessment of the Japanese generals who took part in the two invasions, portraits Hideyoshi as a cunning leader and negotiator, and describes in great detail the eventual political take-over of Tokugawa Ieyasu after Hideyoshi's death in 1598. Kang's memorial was supplemented by two appendices – the first a gazetteer of the Japanese provinces, the second an enumeration and description of Japanese government offices. Finally, Kang added a map depicting the administrative geography of Japan, most likely modelled on a Japanese prototype (not reproduced).

In sum, this slim work furnishes a wealth of information on a fateful period in Korean–Japanese relations. It is now available in an impeccable translation that is enriched by copious notes and explanations. A modern map, however, would have been desirable. The translators also provide an informative introduction that places *The Record of a Shepherd* within the tradition of earlier accounts of heroes of unswerving loyalty and provides essential background information. As the many reprints testify, the work enjoyed great popularity throughout the late Chosŏn. Primarily a moving first-hand description of the Imjin War and its political, military and diplomatic ramifications, this book in translation will interest students of Korean–Japanese relations as well as scholars of East Asian history.

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