



China's Hegemony: Four Hundred Years of East Asian Domination

Ji-Young Lee

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Watching China's growing power and international prominence today, many have invoked China's imperial past to project Asia's future dominated by China. *China's Hegemony* shows that the Chinese-centered international order in Asia's past was not as Sinocentric as conventional wisdom suggests. Instead, throughout the early modern period, Chinese hegemony was accepted, defied, and challenged by its East Asian neighbors at different times, depending on these leaders' strategies for legitimacy among their own populations. This book demonstrates that Chinese hegemony and hierarchy were not an outcome of just China's military power or Confucian culture but were constructed while interacting with other, less powerful actors' domestic political needs.

Focusing on China-Korea-Japan dynamics of East Asian international politics during the Ming and High Qing periods, Lee draws on extensive research of East Asian language documents, including records written by Chinese and Korean envoys. The book offers fascinating and rich details of war and peace in Asian international relations, addressing questions such as: why Japan invaded Korea and fought a war against Sino-Korean coalition in the late sixteenth century; why Korea attempted to strike at the Ming empire militarily in the late fourteenth century; and how Japan created a miniature international order posing as the center of Asia in lieu of the Qing empire in the seventeenth century. By answering these questions, Lee's in-depth study speaks directly to general international relations literature and concludes that hegemony in Asia is a domestic as well as international phenomenon with implications for the contemporary era.

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