



State Formation through Emulation

Neither war nor preparations for war were the cause or effect of state formation in East Asia. Instead, emulation of China – the hegemon with a civilizational influence – drove the rapid formation of centralized, bureaucratically administered, territorial governments in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Furthermore, these countries engaged in state-building not to engage in conflict or to suppress revolt. In fact, war was relatively rare and there was no balance of power system with regular existential threats – the longevity of the East Asian dynasties is evidence of both the peacefulness of their neighborhood and their internal stability. We challenge the assumption that the European experience with war and state-making was universal. More importantly, we broaden the scope of state formation in East Asia beyond the study of China itself and show how countries in the region interacted and learned from each other and China to develop strong capacities and stable borders.

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The East Asian Model

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In memory of Ching-Chi Huang

– Chin-Hao Huang

In memory of Minqian Michelle Kang

– David C. Kang

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Preface

This book began with an observation – an observation so obvious that it is usually overlooked or simply taken for granted: Korea, Japan, and Vietnam have copied an enormous amount from China. Over the years, and in conversations between the two of us, that observation slowly turned into an idea. That idea was turned into an actual research agenda at the prompting of Anna Grzymala-Busse, when she presented a paper as part of the USC (University of Southern California) Center for International Studies working paper series that Dave ran while he directed that center. Encouraged by her new approach to European state formation, we began to pursue our idea about state formation in East Asia. The result is this book.

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