

Ming Grand Strategy & the East Asian War

Kenneth Swope

University of Southern Mississippi

New Book: *East Asia in the World: Twelve Events That Shaped the Modern International Order*, edited by David Kang & Steph Haggard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020)—Mine is chapter 7 https://www.amazon.com/East-Asia-World-Twelve-International/dp/1108790895/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2LC99DPY33HJA&dchild=1&keywords=east+asia+in+the+world&qid=1603988274&s=books&sprefix=east+asia%2Caps%2C234&sr=1-1#reader_1108790895

- A. The Book Project & Its Goals
- B. The Ming Connection
- C. Definitions of Grand Strategy & Strategic Culture
 - The coordination of all elements of national power (economic, political, and military) to accomplish “national” goals, primarily security against external threats.
 - The idea that different states have different predominant sets of strategic preferences that are rooted in the “early” or “formative” military experiences of the state or its predecessor, and are influenced to some degree by the philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of the state and state elites as these develop through time.
- D. Recent Approaches to Studying Chinese & East Asian Strategic Culture
 - Confucian Pacifism (Feng Huiyun)
 - Cultural Realism (Iain Johnston)
 - Structural Realism (Yuan-kang Wang)
 - Ethical Relationalism/Hegemony (Feng Zhang)
 - Malleable nature of Tributary System (Ji-Young Lee)
 - First two agree that culture matters but disagree on which elements of culture were most influential in policy making
 - Wang argues that power considerations trump variables such as culture and ideology
 - Zhang argues for cultural values on sliding scale grounded in Confucian ethics
 - Lee stresses domestic implications of tributary system for Korea
- E. Ming Grand Strategy
 - Concept of 威 (wei)
 - “Victory in war lies in establishing awesomeness.”—*Wei Liaozi*
 - “[The ruler] cannot be without awesomeness, for if he lacks awesomeness he will lose his authority.”—*Three Strategies of Huang Shigong*
- F. Grand Strategy Problematique of the Ming
 - The Mongol threat
 - Border states
 - Internal security

- Coastal threats
 - Tributary states
 - The Jurchens/Manchus (1600s)
- G. How was Grand Strategy Formulated?
- Textual authority & tradition
 - Immediate defense concerns
 - Role of officials {Factions}
 - Role of the emperor
- H. Phases/Periods of Ming Grand Strategy
- Era of consolidation (ca. 1350-1402)
 - Era of expansion (ca. 1403-1449)
 - Era of stability & defensiveness (ca. 1450-1570)
 - Zhengde Interlude (1506-1521)
 - Era of military revival (ca. 1570-1610)
 - Era of defensiveness & decline (ca. 1610-1644)
- I. Linking these Concepts to the East Asian War
- Wanli vs. Hideyoshi
 - Korean position
- J. Questions?