

## Qing Invasion of Joseon Through the Dishes Appearing in the Novel *the Fortress* by Kim Hoon



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**ABSTRACT:** Qing invasion of Joseon or the Second Manchu invasion of Korea (Joseon) in 1636 has been studied by many South Korean scholars and other countries. However, studying this war through a historical literary work, specifically through the dishes that appear in the literary work written about this war, is a new, interesting and still open approach. Therefore, this article focuses on examining the dishes that appear in the novel *The Fortress* (2021) by writer Kim Hoon to show through them the fierceness, misery and hardship of the Joseon people in the last days of 1936 and early 1937.

**KEYWORDS:** Joseon cuisine, Qing invasion of Joseon, *The Fortress*, historical literature, Kim Hoon.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Culinary culture holds significant importance in the realm of cultural studies. Korean cuisine has long been a subject of extensive research, bearing a plethora of substantial and valuable works. A simple query on the Korean Research Information Sharing Service an impressive outcome for the keyword "Korean cuisine" (한국음식), revealing 25,839 works, encompassing 9,116 specialized articles, 3 scientific journal papers, 3,684 theses and dissertations, and 12,467 books<sup>1</sup>. Among these, the exploration of Korean cuisine through literary novels is also abundant. The keyword "culinary - novel" (소설 음식) alone leads to 1,372 works<sup>2</sup>.

As per the Comprehensive South Korean Cultural Dictionary, Qing invasion of Joseon marked the second invasion of Korea by the Qing dynasty, spanning from December 1636 to January of the subsequent year. This military engagement took place in the year of Byeonja and concluded in the year of Dingsu, earning the moniker Qing invasion of Joseon<sup>3</sup>. The studies about *The Han river's southern mountain fortress* during the Qing invasion of Joseon period is diverse. Foremost among these is the *Injo Sillok*, a collection of public records chronicling the daily events of the 14th year under King Injo, covering the period from December of Byeonja to January of Dingsu, encompassing volumes 33 to 34. The *Byeonja Chronicles* authored by Choi Myeong-gil and the *Namhan Records* penned by Kim Sang-heon offer insights into the perspectives of two notable representatives from the peace and war factions (2009:12).

<sup>1</sup> Source:

[http://www.riss.kr/search/Search.do?isDetailSearch=N&searchGubun=true&viewYn=OP&query=한국음식&queryText=&iStartCount=0&iGroupView=5&icate=bib\\_t&colName=all&exQuery=&exQueryText=&order=%2FDESC&onHanja=false&strSort=RANK&pageScale=10&orderBy=&fsearchMethod=search&isFDetailSearch=N&sflag=1&searchQuery=한국음식&fsearchSort=&fsearchOrder=&limiterList=&limiterListText=&facetList=&facetListText=&fsearchDB=&resultKeyword=한국음식&pageNumber=1&p\\_year1=&p\\_year2=&dorg\\_storage=&mat\\_type=&mat\\_subtype=&fulltext\\_kind=&t\\_gubun=&learning\\_type=&language\\_code=&ccl\\_code=&language=&inside\\_outside=&fric\\_yn=&image\\_yn=&regnm=&gubun=&kdc=&ttsUseYn=](http://www.riss.kr/search/Search.do?isDetailSearch=N&searchGubun=true&viewYn=OP&query=한국음식&queryText=&iStartCount=0&iGroupView=5&icate=bib_t&colName=all&exQuery=&exQueryText=&order=%2FDESC&onHanja=false&strSort=RANK&pageScale=10&orderBy=&fsearchMethod=search&isFDetailSearch=N&sflag=1&searchQuery=한국음식&fsearchSort=&fsearchOrder=&limiterList=&limiterListText=&facetList=&facetListText=&fsearchDB=&resultKeyword=한국음식&pageNumber=1&p_year1=&p_year2=&dorg_storage=&mat_type=&mat_subtype=&fulltext_kind=&t_gubun=&learning_type=&language_code=&ccl_code=&language=&inside_outside=&fric_yn=&image_yn=&regnm=&gubun=&kdc=&ttsUseYn=)

<sup>2</sup> Source:

[http://www.riss.kr/search/Search.do?isDetailSearch=N&searchGubun=true&viewYn=OP&queryText=&strQuery=한국음식&exQuery=&exQueryText=&order=%2FDESC&onHanja=false&strSort=RANK&p\\_year1=&p\\_year2=&iStartCount=0&orderBy=&mat\\_type=&mat\\_subtype=&fulltext\\_kind=&t\\_gubun=&learning\\_type=&ccl\\_code=&inside\\_outside=&fric\\_yn=&image\\_yn=&gubun=&kdc=&ttsUseYn=&\\_sub\\_code=&fsearchMethod=search&sflag=1&isFDetailSearch=N&pageNumber=1&resultKeyword=&fsearchSort=&fsearchOrder=&limiterList=&limiterListText=&facetList=&facetListText=&fsearchDB=&icate=all&colName=all&pageScale=10&isTab=Y&regnm=&dorg\\_storage=&language=&language\\_code=&clickKeyword=&relationKeyword=&query=소설+음식](http://www.riss.kr/search/Search.do?isDetailSearch=N&searchGubun=true&viewYn=OP&queryText=&strQuery=한국음식&exQuery=&exQueryText=&order=%2FDESC&onHanja=false&strSort=RANK&p_year1=&p_year2=&iStartCount=0&orderBy=&mat_type=&mat_subtype=&fulltext_kind=&t_gubun=&learning_type=&ccl_code=&inside_outside=&fric_yn=&image_yn=&gubun=&kdc=&ttsUseYn=&_sub_code=&fsearchMethod=search&sflag=1&isFDetailSearch=N&pageNumber=1&resultKeyword=&fsearchSort=&fsearchOrder=&limiterList=&limiterListText=&facetList=&facetListText=&fsearchDB=&icate=all&colName=all&pageScale=10&isTab=Y&regnm=&dorg_storage=&language=&language_code=&clickKeyword=&relationKeyword=&query=소설+음식)

<sup>3</sup> Nguồn: <https://terms.naver.com/entry.naver?docId=576441&cid=46622&categoryId=46622>

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Furthermore, the Qing invasion of Joseon has left its mark on literature as well. Several notable works include *Im Gyeong-eop* (unknown), *Red Arirang of Jianghua Island* (2008) by Gu Jong-seo, *The Returnee Woman* (2013) by Yu Ha-ryeong, and *Prince So Hyun* (2009) by Lee Jung Geun. However, among these, Kim Hoon's *The Fortress* stands out as the most remarkable. Since its initial publication in 2007, it has swiftly resonated with both readers and academic researchers throughout South Korea. Numerous studies have approached the novel *The Fortress* from various angles. These include *An exploration of time within Kim Hoon's writing, as evidenced in The Problem of Time in Kim Hoon's Novel: The Case of The Fortress* (2012), *a consideration of the non-historical aspect of Kim Hoon's historical novel in The Sword Song, The Fortress* (2011), and *an analysis of the widespread and diverse writing techniques used in The Fortress* (2015), etc. Yet, the examination centered on the Qing invasion of Joseon remains a subject underexplored. Moreover, in contrast to other literary pieces, *The Fortress* uniquely delves into the realm of food, capturing Kim Hoon's distinct focus and portrayal. This very aspect drives the choice of *The Fortress* as the subject for this article's exploration of the Qing invasion of Joseon. Specifically, the article will scrutinize the dishes depicted in the novel to unravel the intensity of the Qing invasion of Joseon conflict.

### **2. KIM HOON AND THE NOVEL *THE FORTRESS***

Kim Hoon was born in May 1948 in Seoul and is the third son of Kim Gwang-ju – a renowned journalist and former chief editor of the *Gyeong-hyang newspaper*. He pursued studies in Political Diplomacy and English at Korea University but discontinued his education in both fields midway. During his father's illness, Kim Hoon took on writing responsibilities on his father's behalf, which naturally kindled his passion for novel writing. From 1973 until late 1989, he worked as a journalist for the *Hankuk newspaper*, holding positions such as Chief Reporter at *Sisa Journal*, Editor-in-Chief, Head of Editorial Review, Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Director of Publications at *Kukmin newspaper*, Editorial Board Member of *Hankuk newspaper*, and Deputy Chief Reporter at *Han-gyeo-re newspaper*.

During his time as a journalist, Kim Hoon consistently published commentary pieces under the title "*Literary Diary*" to hone his talents. However, in 1989, he abruptly left his position at the *Hankuk newspaper* without pursuing any other official occupation. During this period, he released two volumes of essays, "*Choice and Support*" and "*Scenery and Wounds*." In 1994, he unveiled "*Memories of the Funnel*" (2 volumes) in the inaugural issue of the *Literary Village Magazine*, officially becoming a part of the literary community. At this time, he was 47 years old.

Ever since Kim Hoon officially stepped into the realm of literature, he has consistently produced a plethora of works that have echoed resoundingly throughout the Korean literary sphere. Among these, "*The Sword Song*" (2001) stands out – a creation that immediately seized attention upon its release, securing the coveted Dong-in Literary Award. The short story "*Cremation*" (2004) garnered the 28th Ideal Literature Award, while "*The Menopause of My Sister*" (2005) was honored with the Hwang Sun-won Literary Award. "*The Fortress*" (2007) clinched the 15th Daesan Literary Award, etc.

"*The Fortress*," set amidst the southern mountain fortress along the Han River (Hangang), first saw the light in 2007. To date, it has traversed the hands of more than a million readers in South Korea, firmly establishing itself as Kim Hoon's most renowned opus. Moreover, the tale was cinematically adapted in 2017, gracing the silver screen as "*The Fortress*" and captivating an audience of nearly 4 million. Furthermore, the novel made its way into Vietnamese literature, translated and published in 2021 by Nguyen Thi Thu Ha.

The tale unfolds during the autumn of 1636, when a hundred thousand Qing troops invaded, pushing Joseon to the edge of survival. As the Qing emperor made slow progress into Joseon, Tatara Ingguldai led the enemy forces in a relentless assault. Faced with this dire scenario, Joseon Injo (1595 - 1649), while on his way to seek refuge on Ganghwa Island, had to change course towards Han river' southern mountain fortress. During that autumn season, Tatara Ingguldai had his forces besiege Han river' southern mountain fortress, sparking a fierce internal debate in Joseon. The faction advocating war, led by Kim Sang-hyeon, clashed with the faction favoring peace, led by Choi Myeong-gil, over the choice between a glorious demise or a life of humiliation for the people of Joseon. Kim Sang-hyeon argued for fighting to the last breath, while Choi Myeong-gil proposed seeking immediate peace and planning for the long-term future. The Joseon army found itself isolated within Han river' southern mountain fortress. Although no major battles erupted, they grappled with severe shortages of provisions and fodder for the horses, as the Qing forces had set fire to everything in their vicinity. Upon returning from the Qing military camp, Choi Myeong-gil primarily emphasized the path of peace, further intensifying the clash between the war and peace factions.

Meanwhile, the Qing emperor (Han) had arrived with his army. Han menaced Han river' southern mountain fortress with formidable artillery. Kim Sang-hyeon and Choi Myeong-gil engaged in continuous arguments without formulating any effective strategy. The lives of the Joseon people descended into misery, and many women were taken captive as slaves. Ultimately, the prince and ministers were all captured. Joseon Injo had no recourse but to depart Han river' southern mountain fortress, offer wine, and kneel before Han three times. It was at this juncture that Han river' southern mountain fortress gradually regained its tranquility.

### 3. KOREAN CUISINE IN THE NOVEL "THE FORTRESS"

Kim Hoon's novel, *The Fortress*, portrays the scene of the king and his court seeking refuge within the fortress during the invasion by the Qing dynasty in 1636. They divided into two opposing factions within the fortress - one advocating for peace and the other for war. King Injo, the courtiers, and the people inside the fortress faced not only hunger due to the scarcity of provisions but also the harsh cold weather. Eventually, the Koreans had to surrender to the Qing forces after 45 days of resistance. Outside the fortress, "Countless women were taken to the Qing base at Samjeon-do. The young and beautiful girls served and poured drinks in the tents of the Qing generals, while the older and less attractive women cooked and assisted the Qing forces outside. When these girls were taken across the river, the Qing soldiers tossed the babies they carried on their backs into the river. At the Songpa ferry, the heads of the babies were smashed, and their legs were stuck in the ice" (2021:231). Inside the fortress, the struggle for survival through food was more intense than the direct battle with the enemy using arrows or spears. Within the fortress, food was scarce to the point that even the king's meals were modest, let alone food for the soldiers and the people. The dishes mentioned in this novel consisted of a bowl of barley rice and soy sauce soup as the soldiers' meal, a pot of wild greens soup stew with chicken thighs for the king, dried fish sauce found within the fortress, beef sent by the enemy, dried persimmons given by Kim Sang-heon to the captive people, grain powder and dried beef, etc. In the following, this article will examine each meal consumed by the king and the courtiers to sustain their lives during the events of the Qing invasion of Joseon. Through this, we can clearly perceive the severity of being confined within the four walls of the fortress with diminishing provisions.

#### 3.1 Barley rice and soy sauce soup

Soy sauce is a type of liquid seasoning made from fermented soybeans. It is usually used as a flavor enhancer rather than a standalone dish. However, in the circumstances where the Joseon king and officials took refuge within the mountain fortress, this seasoning was mixed with boiling water to create a sustenance during the war. This soy sauce soup was improvised during times of scarce food supply.

"The soldiers on duty would all drink a large bowl of soy sauce broth along with a bowl of barley rice in the front yard of the Hall. The relieving soldiers behind them would cook the barley rice in an iron pot for the ones in front to share. (...) They would mix half a jar (90 ml) of concentrated soy sauce into a large bowl of barley rice for consumption. Since there weren't enough bowls, those who finished eating would pass their iron bowls to the soldiers behind them. The quartermasters followed along the line, dividing each iron bowl into three spoonfuls of concentrated soy sauce. The hands of the soldiers from the upper fort down to the lower one were stiff, and their mouths were frozen, making it difficult to eat right away. The soldiers preparing to relieve their shift would soak the hands and feet of the newcomers in warm water and massage their faces. After a while, they could finally move their mouths and tongues. Those about to ascend would hold spoons and insert the hot soy sauce soup into the mouths of the newcomers." (2021:57-58)

The Joseon king, the soldiers, and the people's hearts were all inside the Han river' southern mountain fortress from winter to spring, precisely from the 14th of February, 1636, to the 2nd of February, 1637. This was a time of intense cold and harshness, with continuous rain and snow that seemed unending. King Injo, along with the Crown Prince, ministers, and officials, had to conduct the Ritual of Praying for Clear Skies to dispel the heavy clouds and freezing rain. Amidst this biting cold, the sentries posted outside suffered even more, their empty stomachs constantly unsatisfied. There's a saying in Vietnamese: "One needs food to uphold morality." They had to guard the fortress walls throughout the freezing nights, yet their meals consisted only of barley rice and soy sauce soup. Clearly, their fighting spirit must have been greatly affected.

#### 3.2 Anchovy Fish Sauce

Anchovy is a type of marine fish belonging to the family of bony fish, the anchovy family. Anchovies are widely found in the Western and Southern Seas of Korea, the southern part of the Sea of Japan, and Southeast Asia. They bear a resemblance to sardines and are used for salads, grilling, or being salted to create fish sauce. In Korea, anchovies are most abundant around Ganghwa Island and the Incheon Sea, with their prime flavor in May and June. Anchovy fish sauce is made by soaking anchovies in salt until they mature. During the Joseon era, even the king was served anchovy fish sauce. While taking refuge within the Han river' southern mountain fortress, Korean soldiers accidentally came across a jar of anchovy fish sauce, "the eggs were soft and the water was clear" (2021:164). The time the king spent within the mountain fortress was from mid-December to early February, while anchovies were typically salted in May and June. Hence, the fish sauce had ripened and become consumable. However, it's possible that the food supplies inside the fortress were nearly depleted at that time, prompting King Injo to inquire:

"How many fish in a jar?" (2021:164)

King Injo had to discuss with his inner circle about how to distribute the anchovy fish sauce among those in the royal court. Ultimately, they couldn't come up with a reasonable way to divide the sauce among just over 100 fish. Frustrated, King Injo asked:

"How should we divide it into pieces?" (2021:165)

In response to this question, the inner circle replied:

"Anchovies are small fish. Dividing them into pieces, I don't know..." (2021:165)

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"In the evening, the inner circle went around the Temporary Palace and inside the fortress to distribute the anchovy fish sauce. They wrapped about two fish in a leaf, and for the fish sauce, they used salt, scooping out half a hob for each portion." (2021:165)

This imagery of dividing each small anchovy for the royal family vividly portrays the profound hunger amidst the turmoil. The freezing days of the winter of Joseon in 1636 were even colder as the king and his court still struggled with severe food shortages..

### **3.3 Dog meat**

Dog meat was a common food consumed by the commoners during the Joseon era and could be easily purchased from any meat vendor. Even King Jeongjo of Korea (1752-1880) frequently enjoyed a dog meat soup, and Prime Minister Kim Sangcheol also encouraged its consumption. Dog meat has a long history and is popular in Korea due to the economic agricultural structure and religious rituals. Cattle were needed for farming, and pigs were considered valuable for ceremonial offerings, leaving only dogs or chickens as easily accessible sources of meat for the common people. Dog meat is also mentioned and described in the novel "The Fortress".

"The laborers eat three meals a day with the military rations distributed by the blacksmith's forge. Elderly women in the village cook rice in the courtyard of the forge, chopping turnips and making soybean soup. These elderly women receive payment for their labor in food. The commoners take domestic dogs to the forge. The workers use hammers to strike the dogs, then roast them in the furnace. They have to prepare the meat of four large dogs to evenly distribute a bowl for each person. Seo Nan-swe opens the lid of the pot of meat.

- Add more water and season with salt.

Most of the dogs in the fortress are consumed by the people working at the smithy. When the day comes to slaughter the dogs, the soldiers rush down quickly. The elderly women pour hot soup into the rice mixed with millet and gave each person a bowl. Naru divides the soup using a tray and takes the empty bowls to wash. When the severe cold passes, there is no more sound of barking dogs within the fortress." (2021:124)

This is the scene where the people working at the smithy work together to thread needles to sew rain tents to protect the soldiers on the battlements from rain. In the walled fortress, with no cultivation or external food sources, they depended solely on what could be consumed within the walls. Throughout the 45 days of resistance against the Qing troops, as the weather warmed, the dogs within the fortress were also slaughtered for food. Moreover, during the preparation, they had to add more salt and water to ensure there was enough to distribute. This portrayal evokes compassion for the plight of the people of Joseon in 1636.

### **3.4 Horse Meat**

"In the royal stable, there are two hundred horses, and the horses led by nearby leaders are another hundred. Thirty horses from the horse caravan crossing the frozen river at Songpa died either falling into ice pits or carrying those who fled, and five horses entering the fortress died the next day. The surviving horses had either injured or bleeding legs due to missing hooves, making them unable to work. Despite their outward appearance being fine, their spirits were weakened by the snowstorm, causing their eyes to be dull. The herd of horses exhales warm breath when lying down, so even when whipped, they don't flinch. The royal stablemaster ordered to bring the horses that weren't fit for work to the front yard of the main hall. They put two whole garlic bulbs into each iron pot. The soldiers coming down from the fortress drank a bowl of fatty broth. The scent of stewed horse meat wafted throughout the fortress. The odor carried by the wind permeated the intestines of the soldiers ascending the fortress. At night, the king turned and contemplated how the fat would seep into the soldiers' intestines. The military officials did not eat horse stew.." (2021: 79-80)

Horse meat was also a common food consumed by the people of Korea. Korea is well-known for horse meat, particularly in Jeju Island. Horse meat in Korea is prepared in various dishes like salads, stir-fries, grills, steams, and stews, similar to beef. During the Joseon era, dried horse meat from Jeju Island was often presented to the king. King Yeonsangun (1476-1506) frequently consumed white horse meat to boost his vitality.<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, horses held significance as essential weapons, utilized as cavalry during times of war. Prime Minister Kim Ryu ordered, "*Save the horses. Without cavalry, we cannot open the gates of the fortress and launch a surprise attack.*" (2021:80) Due to the planned use of cavalry, ensuring enough food for the horses was considered even more critical than the soldiers' rations. When the enemy discovered that the Korean soldiers were leaving the fortress to search for dry grass for the horses, they burned all the dry grass around the fortress. However, within the walls, the horses continued to eat throughout the day, as mentioned: "*For four days, the smoke of burning grass rose outside the fortress, yet inside the walls, the horses kept eating all day long.*" (2021:81). This highlights how much attention was given to the horses' well-being during the turmoil of the Qing invasion of Joseon. During that time, horses were only slaughtered for food when there was no other choice. A notable detail here is that the scholars and officials, who belonged to the upper class, did not eat horse soup in the southern mountain fortress that year, but this dish was only for the common people. This detail tells us that the class distinction in the Joseon era was extremely strict. Scholars and officials did not eat horse soup, while the king felt pity when he thought of his soldiers having to eat the greasy soup.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://namu.wiki/w/%EB%A7%90%EA%B3%A0%EA%B8%B0>



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### **3.5 Wild Greens Soup và A Marinated Chicken Leg**

According to the Naver Encyclopedia <sup>5</sup>, the "surasang" - the daily royal meal offered to the king and queen - consists not only of the basic dishes but also includes twelve accompanying dishes served in twelve separate plates. Additionally, if more dishes are presented, they can vary based on the season. The basic dishes and twelve accompanying dishes are as follows:

(1) Basic dishes: rice (white rice, bean rice), soup (seaweed soup, stewed beef bone soup), kimchi (napa cabbage, white radish, salted cucumber; sliced white radish with large salt crystals), dipping sauces (fermented soybean paste mixed with vinegar, chili paste mixed with vinegar, mustard sauce), stock (fish sauce stock, chili sauce stock), steamed dishes (steamed beef ribs), pot...

(2) side dishes: Side dishes: Mixed vegetables with spices (three-color vegetables including spinach, beans, doraji root, and doraji roots), raw vegetables mixed (radish mixed), grilled dish (beef marinated in soy sauce grilled, grilled fish), simmered dish (pork simmered, beef simmered), fried flour dish (fish fried in flour, sea cucumber fried in flour), skewered grilled dish (beef skewered grilled with pine mushrooms, meat or fish skewered grilled), salted dried meat, fish (pollock mixed, dried beef mixed, dried snow fish mixed, salted fish eggs mixed), shrimp paste (shrimp paste), raw salad (beef salad, fish salad, thinly sliced boiled meat, stuffed vegetables (grains stuffed with meat, cucumber stuffed with meat), special dish (raw beef, raw fish, fish wrapped in vegetables, fried eggs).

We can see that the daily meal offered to the king in the Joseon palace has a very clear standard with many diverse dishes prepared by the skilled upper palace in Thuy Lat gian - the kitchen for the king. However, the meals consumed by King Injo when seeking refuge within the Han river's southern mountain fortress were modest and simple, completely different from the usual royal meals.

"The breakfast was served with a marinated chicken leg and a bowl of dried green soup. The flavor was rather mild. As the royal entourage departed from the palace, the attendants carried a jar of soy sauce from the Royal Kitchen. However, while crossing the frozen river at the Songpa ferry, the cart carrying the jar skidded on the ice, causing the jar to break and the soy sauce to spill. Amidst the snowstorm, the court attendants mourned their misfortune. They sadly salvaged the remaining soy sauce, meant as a makeshift supply of provisions within the mountain fortress. The Head Kitchen Attendant urged the Inner Court officials to seek soy sauce from the nearby villages.

The King scooped spoonfuls of the green soup with a marinated chicken leg. As he brought the bowl to his mouth, his tongue explored the texture of the soup. Through the cloudy broth, the sinews and the flow of the Northwest River became apparent. The villagers' soy sauce, clear and crisp, pervaded the scene. (...) The King mixed the rice with the soup. Each rice grain swelled, thoroughly chewed in his mouth. The King's tongue examined each grain ... *Is the country like the smell of dirt, or is it not even compare to the dirt?* ... The steamy nostrils make the king sob."(2021:100)

During the days within the mountain fortress, the royal meal presented to the king lacked chicken meat and consisted only of a single chicken leg and dried wild greens soup. Consequently, the flavor of the dish was rather plain. The court attendants couldn't bring even a drop of the rich soy sauce from the palace into the mountain fortress, so they had to make do with the pale and ordinary soy sauce used by the local villagers in the southern mountain village. The fact that the meal offered to the king was still so modest and lacking, even to the point of poverty, suggests the extent of scarcity experienced by both the common people and the soldiers within the fortress.

### **3.6 Wild mustard green soup**

"The king, court officials, generals, soldiers, and commoners mixed rice into the wild mustard greens soup to eat. Chewing on the frozen roots of the wild mustard vegetable, pulled from the icy ground, tasted bitter, while the soup emitted the fragrance of spring sunshine and the scent of early spring mud. (...) Kim Sang-heon drank the wild greens soup prepared by Naru. He placed dried root vegetables on a bowl of barley rice mixed with the soup and ate. In Kim Sang-heon's throat, mountains and valleys spread out, recalling the distant months and years after the On To, now flowing back to this moment... Nan-swe, don't perish, Nan-swe, survive and return... As he held the soup bowl with both hands and sipped the broth, the rising warmth blurred Kim Sang-heon's vision." (2021:255-256)

the wild mustard greens soup symbolizes the arrival of spring in Korea. During that year, when food supplies within the fortress had almost run out, spring arrived. Wild greens grew in various nooks and crannies of the mountain fortress, providing some sustenance to the people to stave off hunger. However, on the other hand, it also demonstrated the scarcity of food to the extent that even the king and officials had to consume these wild greens.

### **3.7 Dried Persimmons, Grain Powder, and Dried Beef**

In the novel "The Fortress," there are mentions of snacks like dried persimmons, grain powder, and dried beef. Dried persimmons represent the Korean winter. The harvested persimmons are strung on threads and hung to dry in the wind. Grain powder is a common food item packed for long journeys. When hungry, mixing the powder with a bit of warm water is enough to satisfy one's

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<sup>5</sup> <https://terms.naver.com/entry.naver?docId=558771&cid=46672&categoryId=46672>

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hunger. Dried beef is also a portable food taken during times of refuge or long travels. These are meager snacks that the people of Joseon during the Qing invasion of Joseon era had access to amidst the tumultuous times of the nation.

### 4. CONCLUSION

This article has examined the various dishes appearing in the novel "*The Fortress*". It can be observed that in this novel, the author Kim Hoon pays special attention to the food. Here, food is not regarded in an abstract manner like "provisions" or "rice," but it appears in a very detailed and specific way. For instance, while a bowl of barley rice accompanied by a large scoop of hot soy sauce broth is a soldier's meal, a marinated chicken leg and dried wild vegetable soup constitute the king's feast. Despite being mere elements in an extensive historical narrative, items like dog meat, horse meat, and wild vegetables are described in terms of how they are prepared and consumed. Through these descriptions, readers not only sense the brutality of war but also gain insight into the culinary culture of 17th-century Korea, specifically during the Qing invasion of Joseon rebellion. Specifically, we learn that the meals offered to the king during times of hardship are drastically different from the ordinary meals during times of peace. Similarly, the soldier's meal lacks vegetables and fish, consisting only of a blend of spices with warm water. We also come to understand how dog meat soup is prepared by the people of Korea. Furthermore, with the arrival of spring, the abundance of wild vegetables in Korea signifies a unique hope for both the elite and the common people amidst the challenging circumstances of the year 1637.

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