## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

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m eaders}$  of the diary might be overwhelmed by the tangle of official titles Na Man'gap so easily and readily throws around. Titles are fluid. Scholar officials frequently shuffled posts, and modern readers will be tasked to follow all of the official positions that appear. What to make of all these titles? These titles were important to Na. They would have been easily comprehended by officials like himself and other Chosŏn-era readers as they convey status and rank within the Chosŏn bureaucracy. The original literary Chinese expressions for these titles are usually three to five characters in length. Rather than reinvent English equivalents for these titles, I have mostly adopted them from existing comprehensive lists of titles translated by scholars much more capable than me, from such sources as Harvard University's Korean History Gloss compilation, Brother Anthony's list of government offices and posts, and the English translation glossaries of the Veritable Records of King Sejong from the National Institute of Korean History, all cited in the bibliography. These titles, when rendered into English, are clunky and long, but I have left them in the diary to remain faithful to the original text.

lxxxiv

Along with the many names of individuals and the titles, the diary is full of geographical particularities. Most of the action recorded in the diary takes place around the capital, Namhan Mountain Fortress, and Kanghwa Island. Chosŏn and Manchu armies fought mainly in the northwest, but with a few skirmishes in areas to the northeast. Some of these locations are well known to readers today, while the names of other locations mentioned in the diary have been lost. The invasion of 1636–1637 was one battle in a much longer and larger war. While the invasion took place in Korea, other battles before and after the invasion, some mentioned in the diary, were fought on islands and regions along the Chosŏn frontier or north of it in present-day China. Three maps are included to help readers imagine the geographical space of this conflict and visualize the scope of the Chosŏn-Manchu interaction as armies fought, hostages were seized, and envoys dispatched to distant lands. The many references to counties, villages, towns, and regions, all important to Na, are included to assist in charting the conflict.

The dramatis personae does not include all of the nearly one hundred Korean officials mentioned in the diary but focuses on a select few. They are grouped by social status, such as royalty and officials, and territory of origin, such as Chosŏn or Manchu. I fully understand the tension of identifying individuals outside of Korea based on the ethnic term "Manchu," knowing that this expression is newly coined. But this division of the dramatis personae helps modern readers understand that these people were not considered Korean or subjects of Chosŏn. The names of the Chosŏn royal family are listed according to frequency of appearance, while the other groups are listed alphabetically. A brief description of roles and ranks, along with important information gleaned mostly from the Sillok, the Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi, and The Diary of 1636 itself, helps readers follow individuals through the many sections and interrelated stories of the diary. I relied upon biographies in Arthur Hummel's Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing

Period, along with relevant information from the diary, to complete the brief descriptions of the Manchu; the Sillok and The Diary of 1636 accounts were my sources for the handful of Ming Chinese.

Unless otherwise noted, the months and days in the translation remain faithful to the original. For ease of comprehension and comparison to other world events, the cyclical lunar years have been converted to solar years and placed in brackets where relevant. Thus, the cyclical year *pyŏngja* begins in the early year 1636 and ends in early 1637. I have used McCune-Reischauer to transcribe Korean names and words, and Pinyin for Chinese—the systems most widely adopted in academia and libraries around the world. Finally, I have tried to remain true to the original text, but, considering the arcane language and its often-ambiguous expressions, errors are sure to have arisen. I claim responsibility for any such mistakes in my work.

## THE DIARY OF 1636