Historical Memories of Koguryŏ in Koryŏ and Chosŏn Korea

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I wrote this paper in reaction to recent Chinese claims that Koguryŏ was part of Chinese history. Based on an examination of how Koguryŏ was depicted in Koryŏ and Chosŏn histories and other sources, I contend that pre-modern Korean elites constructed historical memories of Koguryŏ as an integral part of what they saw to be a distinct and enduring Korean social and political collectivity. I propose that these memories were an important part of the way in which modern Koreans have re-imagined their nation. I note that the Chinese have no similar historical memories of Koguryŏ and suggest that their denial of Koguryŏ as part of Korean history threatens the Korean sense of national identity.

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Introduction

The recent claim by certain Chinese scholars and officials that Koguryŏ belongs not to Korean but to Chinese history has provoked a storm of protest from Korean scholars and media, has spawned a new Koguryo Research Foundation funded by the South Korean government, and has produced a spate of workshops and conferences in Korea devoted to refuting the Chinese assertions. Although some Western scholars have presented papers at the workshops and conferences, to date nothing has been published in English on this controversial topic.

Perhaps the best sampling of Western academic opinion regarding this issue can be found in the WWW Korean Studies List. Some scholars, including Mark Byington and Gari Ledyard, have dwelled on the speciousness of Chinese claims, stressing that the Chinese position is a retrospective application of the present-day Chinese polity, noting problems with the contemporary Chinese understanding of ancient tributary relations, and arguing that Koguryŏ has long been "embedded in Korean historiography." Other scholars, such as John Jamieson and Andrei Lankov, agree that the Chinese assertions are problematic, but have also pointed out that Korean claims on Koguryŏ are equally specious. They contend that the "embedding" of Koguryŏ in Korean historiography can be traced back no further than the twelfth century and, stressing the differences between Koguryŏ on the one hand and Silla and Paekche on the other, suggest that Koguryŏ, rather than being closely related to the agrarian Korean Han peoples of the southern half

of the Korean Peninsula, should rather be thought of as "part of a coherent pastoral/agricultural northern continuum that inhabited what is today China' s Three Northeastern Provinces." (See, for example, the exchange at http://koreaweb.ws/pipermail/koreanstudies_koreaweb.ws/2004-January0040).

Viewed through the lens of traditional historical scholarship on nations, with its emphasis on continuities in blood, language, and culture, these scholars are right to be skeptical of contemporary Chinese and Korean historical claims on Koguryŏ. I have more than a passing familiarity with the Korean genealogical tradition, and I have yet to see a Korean clan (pon' gwan ssijok) that claims descent from a Koguryŏ progenitor, and I seriously doubt that any such genealogy exists in China. Recent historical linguistic scholarship indicates that the Koguryŏ language was more closely related to Japanese than to the languages of Silla and Paekche (Beckwith 2004) and nobody, to my knowledge, argues that there is any relationship between the Koguryŏ language and Chinese.[1] Culturally, it is difficult to substantiate any linkage between Koguryŏ and modern China or Korea, with the possible exceptions of the Kŏmun' go or the ondol hypocaust heating system, both of which appear to have originated in what was Koguryŏ territory and to have spread south into the Korean Peninsula but not into China. At any rate, linguistic and cultural linkages are problematic—consider, for example, the influence of French language and culture on England.

If, however, we think in terms of more recent scholarship, the flap over Koguryŏ can be seen as closely related to the ways in which we understand how nations are constituted. Western scholarship over the past few decades has tended, under the influence of such scholars as Ernst Gellner (1984) and Benedict Anderson (1991), to argue that nations and nationalisms came into being only in the modern era as the consequence of the rise of industrial capitalism, the organizational and educational activities of the state, the spread of print capitalism, and the efforts of nationalizing intellectuals. Simply put,

1 It should be noted that Korean scholars argue that elements of the old Koguryŏ language are preserved in modern Korean place names. One example they cite is the term "kol," which apparently derives from the common Koguryŏ place name "hol," which appears frequently in the "Treatises on Geography" (Chiriji 地理志) found in such Korean histories as the *Samguk sagi* and the *Koryŏsa*.

the trend has been to see nations as "imagined communities," as novel forms of consciousness that represent a sharp epistemic break with pre-modern locality- and status-specific senses of self. Scholars have pursued the same approach to these issues in Asian societies, following the lead of Partha Chatterjee (1986), to argue that nationalism arose in Asia as a derivative discourse whereby Asian intellectuals sought to appropriate and deploy Western-style nationalism as a defensive measure against imperialist aggression.

Other scholars, such as Anthony Smith (1986), have contended that modern nationalisms cannot be understood apart from their origins in pre-modern ethnic identities, that myths, memories, and symbols from earlier times provided important building blocks for the construction of modern nations. In the case of China, Prasenjit Duara (1995) has noted the existence in pre-modern times of collective forms of identity that, when politicized, came to resemble modern nationalism. I myself have argued that there existed in pre-modern Korea a sense of belonging to a distinct political, social, and cultural collectivity, usually referred to as Tongguk 東國, that transcended individual kingdoms or dynasties, and that this sense of collective identity came about as the consequence of the state' s organizational and educational activities and of foreign invasions (Duncan 1998).

In this paper, I propose to shift my focus away from institutions and wars and focus on the role of memory in the construction and maintenance of collective identities. A key assumption here is that shared memories are important constitutive elements of nationalities, that shared memories of past glories, sacrifices, and suffering are what hold national communities together (Abizadeh 2004).

Individual personal memories are, of course, often partial, false, and even forgotten. Even more so are national memories. Indeed, as many scholars have pointed out, national memories are often based in myths and are willfully selective in that they omit aspects that might be counter-productive to the creation and maintenance of collective unity—especially inasmuch as collective historical memories are typically created and propagated by political and social elites. As such, they can often be easily shown by academic historians to be only partially true or even false. Deconstruction of these mem-

ories can be potentially liberating for marginalized and oppressed groups within a national collectivity, but that does not dispose of the affective power of historical memories as the glue that binds and motivates the national community. Indeed, to deny historical memory may be to deny the possibility of human community. To quote Benedict Anderson, "In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson 1991, 6).

The dispute over Koguryŏ is indeed a problem in the style in which the Korean and Chinese national communities are imagined now and in how they have been imagined over time. The recent claim that Koguryŏ is part of Chinese history is not only part of a new attempt to re-imagine the Chinese national community, but it is also direct challenge to the ways in which Koreans have imagined their nation. As I will show in this paper, Koguryŏ has been an important part of the Korean collective historical memory for at least the past 1,000 years.

II. Koguryŏ in Koryŏ Historical Memory

The Silla kingdom in its declining years faced challenges from two new breakaway states, one in the southwest and one in the north. The southwestern state, founded by Kyŏnhwŏn 甄萱, was called Later Paekche. The northern state, established by Kungye 弓裔, was initially known as Later Koryŏ.[2] That Kyŏnhwŏn and Kungye chose to present themselves as resurrecting Paekche and Koguryŏ suggests some real limits to the extent to which Silla had been able to fashion some sort of "national" consciousness among the populace, but it also indicates that memories of Paekche and Koguryŏ were still strong in the regions that had once been parts of those two kingdoms.

Kungye subsequently changed the name of his state to Majin 摩震 and

2 Modern Korean history textbooks, such as Han Yungu's *Tasi channŭn uri yŏksa*, frequently state that Kungye first called his kingdom Later Koguryŏ. More recent research, however, indicates that it was Later Koryŏ. I am indebted to Chong Kŭbok of the Academy of Korean Studies for this information.

then T'aebong 泰封 before he was ousted by Wang Kŏn 王建 in 918. Upon taking the throne, Wang Kŏn changed the name of the new kingdom to Koryŏ. Koryŏ has usually been understood as an abbreviated form of Koguryŏ, but recent research indicates that Koguryŏ had changed its name to Koryŏ during the 5th century (Park 2004). This implies that Wang Kŏn and his supporters may have been seeking to present themselves as successors to Koguryŏ. Certainly an effort was made to expand the kingdoms northern borders into territory that had once been part of Koguryŏ but had fallen outside Silla' s borders.

That implication is strengthened by the importance Wang Kŏn and other Koryŏ kings placed on P'yŏngyang, the old Koguryŏ capital, that had fallen outside of Silla's borders and lain in ruins after the fall of Koguryŏ in 668. P'yŏngyang was rebuilt, fortified, and designated as the kingdom's Western Capital (Sŏgyŏng 西京). Subsequent efforts were made, in the 940s and again in the 1130s, to move the main capital to P'yŏngyang. Although these efforts were typically justified in terms of the geomantic superiority of P'yŏngyang and may have been motivated by the kings' desires to escape from the domination of the Kaegyŏng-centered aristocracy, at least in the case of the Myoch'ŏng rebellion of the 1130s, it also appears to have involved a desire to recover the old northern lands of Koguryŏ that still lay beyond Koryŏ's borders.

Concrete expression of Koryŏ's sense of self as successor to Koguryŏ can be found in the *Koryŏsa* entries related to the border conflict between Koryŏ and the Khitan Liao in the late tenth century. In 993 negotiations with Khitan invaders, the Koryŏ official Sŏ Hŭi 徐熙 refuted Khitan contentions that Koryŏ was Silla's successor state and that Koryŏ was infringing on Khitan territory, stating, "That is not true. Our country is the successor to Koguryŏ. That is why we call ourselves Koryŏ and have established a capital at P'yŏngyang" (*Koryŏsa* 94:4b). Michael Rogers (1983) has argued persuasively that the entire exchange between the Khitan leader and Sŏ Hŭi is a fabrication of later history compilers, but even so it suggests an historical memory among Koryŏ elites that their kingdom was indeed the successor to Koguryŏ.

The *Koryŏsa* was compiled by early Chosŏn scholars and thus may be

more reflective of 15th century historical memories than of Koryŏ memories. If, however, we turn to histories compiled during the Koryŏ period, such as Kim Pusik's 金富軾 twelfth century *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 or Iryŏn's 一然 thirteenth century *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事, we find Koguryŏ included along with Silla and Paekche as part of Korean history. Kim Pusik, in particular, has been roundly criticized by modern Korean nationalists, following the cue of Sin Ch'aeho, for his Silla-successionism, his admiration for things Chinese, and his omission of Parhae from the *Samguk sagi*. Kim Pusik does appear to have been a Silla-successionist and did accept Chinese models--although not to the sino-philistic degree of which he has been accused. But he presented a story of the conflict between Silla and Tang very different from that found (or, in fact, omitted from) Chinese histories. More importantly for the issues at stake here, not only did he include Koguryŏ as part of the Koryŏ's historical legacy—the three kingdoms that preceded his Koryŏ were Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla, but he lionizes Ŭlchi Mundŏk 乙支文德 for his defeat of a huge invasion force from Sui China, in effect emphasizing past glories of Koguryŏ as part of the collective historical memory of Koryŏ.

One thing worthy of note here is the treatment of Parhae in the Koryŏ period. Whether Parhae belongs to Korean history, Chinese history, or Siberian history has long been a point of controversy among scholars from Korea, China, and Russia and remains an issue of considerable nationalistic interest. We should note here that neither Kim Pusik nor Iryŏn laid claim to Parhae. Kim Pusik simply ignored Parhae, but Iryŏn identified Parhae as a Malgal (*Moho* 靺鞨) kingdom (*Samguk yusa* 1: Malgal parhae). In other words, whereas Korean claims to Parhae as part of their historical memory can perhaps be dismissed as the imaginings of more recent nationalists such as Sin Ch'aeho, Koryŏ period historical memories of Koguryŏ are not modern constructs—rather they date back well over 1,000 years.

Poetic works, such as Yi Sŭnghyu's 李承休 *Chewang un'gi* 帝王韻紀, also provide examples of Koguryŏ as part of a distinctly Korean historical memory. The first volume of *Chewang un'gi* deals with the rulers of China (which Yi Sŏnghyu terms Chungjo 中朝) from the mythical founders through the Song 宋; the second volume deals with the rulers of Korea

(which Yi calls Tongguk). Koguryŏ is included in the second volume, along with Paekche and Silla, as part of Korean history.

Perhaps the strongest assertion of historical memory of Koguryŏ can be found in the *Tongmyŏngwang p'yŏn* 東明王篇 (The Lay of King Tongmyŏng), compiled by Yi Kyubo 李奎報 in 1193 to relate the founding myth of Koguryŏ. Although Yi Kyubo began his preface to the Lay of King Tongmyŏng with a statement of concern about how the story had been passed down as a magical tale among the ordinary people, he ends with a positive affirmation of the tale: "The affairs of King Tongmyŏng were not things that was bewitched by the people with magical changes, but were actually the traces of the founding of the country. If I do not write this down, what will there be for later generations to see? Thus I have written this down in poetry to let the world know that our country was originally the land of a sage" (*Tongguk Yi sangguk chip* 東國李相國集 3:1a-2a). Whether Yi Kyubo was actually preserving a tale that had been passed down for hundreds of years among the common people of Korea or whether he was simply responding to the strong sense of Koguryŏ-successionism of the era of military rule, as suggested by Michael Rogers (1983) is not clear and, in fact, is not relevant to the issue here. Also whether the tale of King Tongmyŏng represents historical fact or mere myth is also not relevant. Rather the point is that Koguryŏ was a major part of the way in which the people of Koryŏ—certainly elites such as Yi Sŭnghyu or Yi Kyubo and perhaps even ordinary commoners—were remembering their history and thus imagining their national community.

III. Koguryŏ in Chosŏn Historical Memory

Memory of Koguryŏ as part of Korean national history was expressed in the Chosŏn period in a number of ways. One was the compilation of histories. Another was symbolic measures taken by the court. A third was the writings of various literati found in literary collections and other works. Together these things worked to perpetuate a collective historical memory of Koguryŏ as part of Korea's national heritage.

The official dynastic histories of the Koryŏ dynasty, the *Koryŏsa* and

the *Koryŏsa chŏryo* were, as mentioned earlier, compiled in fifteenth century Chosŏn from Veritable Records passed down from the Koryŏ. That the Chosŏn compilers of the dynastic histories included such Koguryŏ-related entries as that of Sŏ Hŭi confronting the Khitans indicates that they succeeded to and affirmed the historical memory of Koguryŏ as part of the Korean heritage. Indeed I believe it safe to say that the collective historical memory of the Koryŏ—particularly as it related to the Three Kingdoms and Koguryŏ—was transmitted largely intact into the Chosŏn period.

The Chosŏn period also saw the publication of a large number of books purporting to depict the full range of Korean history from Tan'gun 檀君 and Kija 箕子 down through the end of the Koryŏ. Representative works from the early Chosŏn period include the *Tongguk saryak* 東國史略 complied by Kwŏn Kŭn 權近 at the beginning of the fifteenth century and such mid-fifteenth century histories as Sŏ Kŏjŏng's 徐居正 *Tongguk t'ongam* 東國通鑑 and Yi P'a's 李坡 *Samguksa chŏryo* 三國史節要. All of these histories, which draw heavily from such Koryŏ period sources as the *Samguk sagi*, feature Koguryŏ as an integral part of Korean history.

Early Chosŏn poetic works, also expressed memories of Koguryŏ. Examples include Yun Hoe's 尹淮 *Yŏktae senyŏn'ga* 歷代世年歌 and Kwŏn Nam's 權擥 *Ŭngjesiju* 應制侍註. The former followed the lead of Yi Sŭnghyu's *Chewang un'gi* in dealing with Chinese dynasties (including the Mongol Yuan) in one volume and Korean kingdoms (down through Koryŏ) in another. The latter dealt only with Korean rulers, beginning with the mythical Tan'gun and coming down through the three kingdoms to Koryŏ, and put special emphasis on entities in Manchuria, including Kija Chosŏn and Koguryŏ.

Histories from the second half of the Chosŏn dynasty continued to depict Koguryŏ as part of a Korean history that began with Tan'gun. Some representative works include Hong Yŏha's 洪如河(seventeenth century *Tongguk t'onggam chegang* 東國通鑑提綱, Hong Manjong's 洪萬宗 early eighteenth century *Tongguk yŏktae ch'ongmok*東國歷代總目, An Chŏng bok's 安鼎福 *Tongsa kangmok* 東史綱目of the mid-eighteenth century, along with the *Haedong yŏksa* 海東繹史 authored by Han Ch'iyun 韓致奫 and the *Tongsa* 東史 compiled by Yi Chonghwi 李種徽 near the end of the eighteenth

century. These historians, caught up in factional struggles and competing discourses over historical and cultural legitimacy, sometimes took differing views on Koguryŏ, with some, such as Hong Yŏha, criticizing Koguryŏ for its reliance on military force instead of peaceful diplomacy in relations with China and others, such as Yi Chonghwi praising Koguryŏ and tracing legitimacy from Tan'gun through Puyŏ and Koguryŏ.

An Chŏgbok's treatment of Koguryŏ in the *Tongsa kangmok* is worthy of attention. In comparing the Three Kingdoms, An depicted Koguryŏ as the strongest, and he also made efforts to show that Koguryŏ had come into being before Han Wudi conquered Old Chosŏn:

> According to the *Samguk sagi*, Koguryŏ lasted 705 years. But King Munmun of Silla told An Sŭng of Koguryŏ that 'Since your great ances-tor founded your kingdom, his heirs succeeded to the throne for eight hundred years. In the old days, people used to round numbers to a higher figure when they told a story. But would King Munmu have rounded 705 years up to 800 years? From the year Wudi conquered Chosŏn (108 BCE) to the year Koguryŏ is said to have been founded (37 BCE) is 72 years. Moreover, if one counts backward from the year when Koguryŏ fell (668 CE) to the year when the Xuantu Commandery was established, one will come up with 776 years. Therefore, it is cer-tain that Koguryŏ was already in existence when the Han commanderies were established (*Tongsa kangmok* 3: 554-55; translation adapted from Peter H. Lee, ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Tradition*, vol 2, 228-29.)

Whereas Korean histories of this period conventionally used the Tan'gun myth to demonstrate an origin of Korean history prior to and independent of Chinese influence, An appears to be attempting to extend that argument down to Koguryŏ as well, in effect emphasizing the Koreanness of Koguryŏ. Again, as in the case of Yi Kyubo's *Tongmŏngwang p'yŏn*, the historical "truth" of the dating and circumstances of Koguryŏ's origins are not the issue—rather it is the national memory that is being constructed and propagated.

The Chosŏn court repeatedly took ritual measures to reinforce the collective memory of Koguryŏ as part of Korean history. Examples include an

occasion when King Sejong instructed the Ministry of Rites to establish shrines for Tan'gun, Kija, and the founders of the Three Kingdoms of Silla, Koguryŏ, and Paekche (*Sejong sillok* 37: 09/08/21), an instance when King Yŏngjo ordered that the tombs of the kings of the Koryŏ dynasty and of Tan'gun, Kija, and the founders of the Three Kingdoms be repaired (*Yŏngjo sillok* 101: 39/04/22), and a time when King Sukchong ordered that titles be given to shrines for a number of luminaries from the Korean past, including Yi Sunsin and Koguryŏ's Ŭlchi Mundŏk (*Sukchong sillok* 45: 33/02/06). In carrying out these symbolic measures, the Chosŏn court was in effect asserting that Koguryŏ (along with Tan'gun, Kija, Silla, and Paekche) was part of Korea's history and that it, as the current dynasty in Korea, was succeeding to the historical legacies of those entities.[3]

In the eighteenth century, some Korean literati--reacting perhaps to rise of the Manchu Ch'ing dynasty--began to construct new memories of the Korean past by reassessing the place of Manchuria in Korean history. This manifested itself in arguments by such men as Yu Tŭkkong 柳得恭 (*Parhae ko* 渤海考) and Han Ch'iyun (*Haedong yŏksa*) that Parhae was a successor state to Koguryŏ, that Parhae was therefore part of Korean history, and by implication that the Koreans had an historical claim to ownership of the Manchu homeland. This appears to have been a departure from the Koryŏ period memories that excluded Parhae and provides an example of how historical memories can be reconstructed in the face of changing historical situations.

Not all late Chosŏn literati agreed fully with Yu and Han. Chŏng Yagyong 丁若鏞, writing in the early nineteenth century, accepted the idea that Parhae was part of Korean history, but he rejected the notion that Korea had a claim to land north of the Chosŏn dynasty's borders, as he laid out in his *Kanggye ko* 疆界考. After some discussion of what he regarded as Korea's northwestern borders ("our northwestern border" 我邦西北地界) prior to the rise of the Three Kingdoms, he goes on to say:

3 It should be noted that there is evidence of similar symbolic actions by Koryŏ kings. King Hyŏnjong 顯宗 (1009-1031) is reported to have ordered that the tombs of Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla kings be refurbished and that passers-by be required to dismount when passing in front of those tombs (*Koryŏsa* 4:28b).

A change occurred when Koguryŏ arose in the north, establishing a new northwestern border farther west, along the Liao River. Koguryŏ arose in what is now China's Kaiyuan 開原 County, but grew much larger, expanding southward until it reached P'yŏngyang. During and even after China's Han and Wei dynasties, our southern border underwent some changes, but the northern border did not even develop any wrinkles. Even when the Sui and Tang ruled over China, the Liao River continued to form our northwestern boundary. When Koguryŏ fell and Parhae rose to replace it, although it placed its western capital along the Amnok River, Parhae still maintained a border with China from Kaiyuan in the north to the mouth of the Amnok River in the south, considering that territory its western region. Thus our territory (a chi kangyŏk) was originally this broad and expansive. But the Khitans realized their ambition to possess completely the land north of the Amnok, and thus our northern border reached no further than Poju. After this the Amnok River became a natural barrier, cutting off part of our territory in the northwest. Our northeastern border at that time (early Koryŏ) was drawn south of the Tuman River, originally the land of the Okchŏ. Since the time of Koguryŏ that territory had been considered Korean land (ye a p'ando)···. After Parhae fell, the Jurchen occupied that region···. Later, the Mongols made these lands into Ho-lan province of the Yuan Empire. Up through the end of the Koryŏ, we were unable to recover these lands. After our Chosŏn dynasty began ruling over our land, the area north of South Hamgyŏng and to the Mach'ŏn Mountains gradually came under our control. By the reign of King Sejong, the entire region south of the Amnok River was Korean once again, and King Sejong was able to establish six forts south of the Tuman. During the reign of King Sŏnjo, we also gained control over the Sambong plateau and established the new prefecture of Musan there. Consequently, the Tuman River, too, became the border, forming a natural barrier" (*Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ* 與猶堂全書 vol. 1, 15:7a-8b; translation adapted from Peter Lee, ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Tradition* vol. 2).

This selection from Chŏng Yagyong's treatise on Korea's borders reveals that Chŏng, a prominent literatus of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and one of the most critical and progressive thinkers of his time, shared the collective historical memories that had been passed down from the early Koryŏ period. For Chŏng and his countrymen,

Korea/Tongguk constituted a distinct political and social collectivity that transcended individual dynasties and kingdoms and that could be traced back to very early times. Koguryŏ was an important early part of that collectivity.

IV. Some Final Comments

Some Western scholars of Korean history, taking their cues from Benedict Anderson, Ernst Gellner, and Partha Chatterjee, contend that the Korean nation and Korean nationalism came into being only after the opening of Korea to the West in the late nineteenth century as a defensive measure against Western and subsequent Japanese and Chinese imperialism. They have a point, particularly if we accept modernist definitions of nationalism, particularly such features as the acceptance of full social equality among all members of the nation and the ideal of the independent nation-state. From that perspective, the social leveling of the Kabo reforms, the destruction of the Yŏngŭn Gate 迎恩門 and its replacement by the Tongnip Gate 獨立門, and the proclamation of the Great Han Empire near the end of the nineteenth century mark the beginnings of nation and nationalism in Korea. If, however, we accept Anthony Smith's contention that modern nations have their origins in ethnic identities, identities constituted by such things as myth, memory, and symbol, we can recognize that the nationalist activists of the late nineteenth century did not have to invent a Korean nation out of whole cloth. To the contrary, they had at their disposal a wealth of collective historical memories of Korea/Tongguk as a distinct and enduring political, social, and cultural collectivity.

As I have argued in this paper, Koguryŏ was a lasting and important part of those memories. If anything, Koguryŏ has become even an more important part of the Korean collective sense of self over the past one hundred-plus years because memories, of ancient vintage or of recent resuscitation, of Koguryŏ's successful repulsion of foreign invaders from Sui and Tang China have given courage and hope to people who have suffered grievously at the hands of imperialist aggression, be it Chinese interventionism in the 1880s and 1890s, Japanese colonialism from 1910 to 1945, or national

division at the hands of Western superpowers after 1945. Thus any effort by an outside power, such as China, to deny that Koguryŏ is part of Korean history is certain to be seen as a direct affront to the Korean sense of nationhood.

I have not read widely in Chinese sources, but I will venture to make two comments here. First, premodern Chinese histories, such as the *Shiji*, the *Sanguozhi*, the *Jiu Tangshu* and the *Xin Tangshu*, all treated Koguryŏ in the section of the biographies set aside for non-Chinese "barbarians". In other words, they depicted Koguryŏ being outside the Chinese socio-political and cultural collectivity as they envisioned it. Second, in the process of (re)imagining a Chinese nation in the first half of the twentieth century, Chinese nationalists engaged in a racist discourse that privileged persons deemed to be of Han descent and excluded Manchus, Mongols, and other ethnic groups (Chow 1997). It wasn't until the 1980s that Chinese officials began to advance arguments for a Chinese nation made up of numerous ethnic groups, the so-called "Great Family of China," and began to rewrite history to incorporate what had previously been seen as barbarian outsiders in a greater "Chinese" history (Sautman 1997). The current claims over Koguryŏ as part of Chinese history must be seen within this new context of a multi-ethnic Chinese nationalism.

The way in which the Chinese officials and scholars engaged in this process of constructing new Chinese historical memories seem indifferent to the way in which it entails the denial of Korean historical memories raises some interesting questions.[4] This can perhaps be attributed to Chinese arrogance, that the Chinese are much more powerful than the Koreans and simply do not care what the Koreans think. This may be true, but we must also consider that the Chinese appear to be interested in creating some sort of Northeast Asian equivalent to the former European Common Market, in which case they must certainly be wary of needlessly antagonizing their

4 It should be noted that not all Chinese scholars conform totally to the official position. Some, such as Sun Jinji 孫進己 of the Shenyang Center for East Asia Studies, argue that Koguryŏ belongs to both China and Korea, but even Sun contends that China is the primary successor to Koguryŏ. His reasoning is that the vast bulk of what was Koguryŏ territory now belongs to the People's Republic of China and that the overwhelming majority of the Koguryŏ population fell under Tang Chinese control.

Korean neighbors. We can also consider concerns that have been voiced by scholars in South Korea that China is worried that a reunified Korea may press claims for portions of Chinese territory in Kando (Jiandao 間島) that are believed to have been ceded to China by Japanese colonial authorities. Such concerns, if real, may not be without foundation, given the way in which certain extreme nationalist elements in South Korea assert that "Manchuria is Korean land" and the fact that, at least as recently as 1994 the cadets at the South Korean army's Military Academy (Yukkun sagwan hakkyo) in T'aenung were trained under the slogan "Reunify the national land and recover the old lands" (Kukt'o t'ongil kot'o hoebok 國土統一故土回復), an obvious irredentist reference to Manchuria.

I am not sure to what extent these particular concerns motivate Beijing. It seems more likely to me that the Chinese worries are primarily domestic. The development of a market economy in China and the concomitant, if limited, liberalization of Chinese society presents the leadership in Beijing with some serious problems. One is the question of how to avoid the fate of the Soviet Union. The men in Beijing witnessed the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s as ethnic/national minorities in such border region Socialist Republics as the Baltic republics, Georgia, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and other locales broke away from Russia. The Chinese authorities must surely be concerned that some of their officially recognized 56 minority peoples such as the Tibetans, the Uighurs in Xinjiang, the Mongols in Inner Mongolia, and perhaps the Koreans in the Korean Autonomous Region in Manchuria --not to mention Taiwan-- might also seek to break away and proclaim independence at some future time. The other problem is that of ideology. Although the Communist Party is still the ruling power in China, the free market reforms of the past two decades have rendered Communism bankrupt as a ruling ideology. In their search for a replacement, the men in Beijing seem to have opted for a kind of statist nationalism that prizes territorial integrity above other alternatives. One of the ways they appear to have chosen to legitimize their state-centered nationalism is to rewrite history, to attempt to construct new "national" historical memories that incorporate peripheral entities such as Koguryŏ, which had once been considered to be a kingdom of non-Chinese barbarians, into the historical

Chinese polity.

Whether the Chinese authorities will succeed in their effort to construct new "Chinese" historical memories remains to be seen. What is of concern here is what this project means for Korean-Chinese relations and for Korea itself. It seems to me that, despite the underlying and very real economic interests (which in themselves are quite complicated),[5] this issue will almost certainly bring about some degree of cooling in relations between Seoul and Beijing. Indeed the question of how the People's Republic of China represents Korean history on its official websites has already provoked a number of diplomatic protests from Seoul[6] and has prompted the South Korean government, as already noted, to create the Koguryŏ Research Foundation in order to refute the Chinese claims. Whether this will eventually present serious obstacles to the long-term goal, held by both China and South Korea, of the creation of some sort of Northeast Asian common market is uncertain, but certainly presents itself as a matter of concern.

The controversy may also breathe new life into Korean nationalism. Nationalist sentiment in South Korea, which reached a peak in the 1980s, began to die down—certain outbursts critical of the United States and Japan not withstanding—in the 1990s and the early 2000s. The Koguryŏ controversy may fan the flames of Korean nationalism, give new life to extremist dreams of Korean irredentism, and generally complicate Korean efforts to deal with the economic, social, and cultural demands of globalization. This, from my perspective as a scholar of Korean history who is not unsympathetic with certain Korean national aspirations such as reunification, is perhaps one of the potentially most unhappy outcomes of this affair.

At any rate, this controversy illustrates the constructed and ultimately malleable nature of collective historical or "national" memories. The

5 There was an initial enthusiasm in South Korea for the potential to make profits in China. More recently, however, this has cooled as Korean investments in China have failed to yield substantial profits while Chinese exports, both industrial and agricultural, have made substantial inroads in South Korea's export and domestic markets.

6 Official Chinese websites on Korean history routinely included Koguryŏ as part of Korean history until quite recently. In April of 2004, the Chinese Foreign Ministry deleted Koguryŏ as part of Korean history. This prompted a protest from the South Korean government and China reinstated Koguryŏ, only to delete it once again in August of 2004.

Chinese are currently engaged in an effort to create a new Chinese "national" memory of Koguryŏ that has no foundation in premodern elite-produced historical records and, I suspect, in popular collective memories, even in the Dongbei/Manchuria region—not to mention the rest of China. The Korean memories of Koguryŏ, old and now widely shared though they may be, are still *ex post facto* constructs that are closely tied to the ways in which Koryŏ, Chosŏn, and eventually twentieth century intellectual and political elites sought to see and present themselves, and may have had little to do with how the vast majority of the Koryŏ, Chosŏn and perhaps even colonial Korean populaces saw themselves or their histories.[7] Nonetheless, these memories have, through the educational efforts of the post-1945 Korean states, both north and south, become an essential part of the way in which ordinary Koreans imagine their history and imagine themselves as Koreans. Beijing's claim to Koguryŏ as part of Chinese history is a direct affront to the Korean sense of Koreanness and promises to be a controversial issue for some time to come.

7 Of course, Yi Kyubo's comments regarding stories about the founder of Koguryŏ suggest that ordinary people of the mid-Koryŏ period had some memories of Koguryŏ, but it is not clear who those "ordinary people" were. Given that Yi Kyubo was a member of the mid-Koryŏ ruling elite who lived in the capital city of Kaesŏng, it seems more likely that he was talking about residents of the capital city than of the rural villagers who made up the overwhelming majority of the Koryŏ populace. My own somewhat extensive but not exhaustive investigation of late Chosŏn oral traditions indicates that memories of Koguryŏ were not a significant part of 18th or early 19th century Korean peasant identities.

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