



**China's Nationalist Historiography
of the "Northeast Project" and the
Australian Response to Its Challenges**

Pankaj N. Mohan, The University of Sydney

**Journal of Inner and East Asian Studies
volume 3, number 1 (June 2006): 27~46**

*© 2006 by Koguryo Research Foundation. All Right Reserved.
No portion of the contents may be reproduced in any form without
written permission of Koguryo Research Foundation.*



China's Nationalist Historiography of the "Northeast Project" and the Australian Response to Its Challenges

The history of early Korean history, notably Koguryō, has faced formidable challenges in the recent times due to the rise of aggressive nationalism in China. The historical project of the Northeast Project is an expression of China's new nationalism, and is aimed at achieving strategic goals of the Chinese state by providing ideological underpinning to its political and economic agenda. The indigenization of Koguryō as a powerful "ethno-symbolism" is, perhaps, a device to counterbalance and undermine Korean national identity and revive the old pattern of the Chinese World order. The Chinese historians belonging to the Northeast Project performed the task of depicting Koguryō kings as officials under the rule of the Chinese state by using Chinese sources selectively and discriminately and disregarding epigraphic evidence. The project's scholarship on Koguryō represents primarily a mechanical interpretation of investiture and the tribute system, and contributes towards obfuscating rather than elucidating the historical character of these institutions. As several scholars have pointed out, tribute and investiture represented the forms of China's relationship not only with Koguryō, but also with the entire "Tianxia" (All Under Heaven), including India. Particularly after the fall of Han when China was politically divided and its ability to control the states on its border was considerably undermined, this mechanism of diplomacy was no longer premised on the concept of superordination and subordination. Future research on Koguryō should aim at providing a cross-cultural and comparative understanding of these issues.

China's Nationalist Historiography of the "Northeast Project" and the Australian Response to Its Challenges¹

Pankaj N. Mohan, The University of Sydney

China's Northeast Project (Dongbei Gongcheng), initiated in 2003, is inalienably bound to China's vision of its future role in the world. In other words, this project forms part of the Chinese strategy of securing pivotal position in the new world order of the twenty-first century, dubbed as the Asian Century. The term "Asian Century" was officially adopted by China in 1988 when China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping referred to it in his talks with Rajiv Gandhi, the then prime minister of India (Narayanan, 1998). In the subsequent years China made unprecedented progress in economic, political, and military fields; these achievements, however, also rendered of the legacy of Mao Zedong largely irrelevant. Particularly after the Tiananmen incident and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc it became obvious that Marxism could no longer provide ideological sustenance to the Chinese people, and that China needed to re-invent nationalism as an instrument of political mobilization and cohesion. Aggressive nationalism was also viewed by China's ruling elite as a potentially effective means for reconciling the nation's pride in its recent economic achievements with the regime's political insecurity. As a result, state-sponsored nationalism gained unsurpassed momentum in the late nineties and the early years of the new millennium.

Today nationalism is the most powerful ideological force in China. The

¹ I am grateful to Prof. Shin Jong-wŏn of the Academy of Korean Studies and Dr. Simone Marshall of the University of Sydney for reading this paper with meticulous care and offering many valuable suggestions.

initial stirring of this new nationalism found expression in China in such anti-West publications as *China Can Say No* 中國能說不, *China Still Can Say No* 中國還是能說不 and *Behind the Demonization of China* (妖魔化中國的背後).² Apparently, these early outbursts of nationalism were empowered by “victim narratives,” to borrow the expression of Peter Gries (2004). This “victim” psychology stressed the need for China to settle accounts with the West, guilty of subjecting the “Celestial Empire” to a century of shame and humiliation. Gradually China’s monolithic nationalism based on the “victim narrative” of China’s post-Opium War destiny became diversified and assumed “restorationist” complexion. Wang Gungwu defines China’s “restoration nationalism” as combining the “elements of both preservation and renewal,” but “tying in the faith in a glorious past more directly with a vision of a great future” (Wang 1996). The element of preservation invokes the memory of China’s Confucian world which is not much different from Tu Weiming’s “Cultural China” (1991).

Related to the concept of “Cultural China” is the notion of China’s peaceful rise (中國和平崛起) which was first used by the former Vice Principal of the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party, Zheng Bijian, in late 2003, and later by Wen Jiabao, the premier of the People’s Republic of China, in an ASEAN meeting as well as during his visit to the United States (Suryanarayana 2004). The use of “Peaceful” in this phrase is as empty and meaningless as in many other clichés of the PRC that we often hear in the Chinese media. For instance, the Chinese state often makes solemn declaration that “Chinese people have enjoyed a high degree of democracy and human rights” and “China’s policy is based on good neighborliness.” The most important aspect of China’s new nationalism is the rise of China (not necessarily the “peaceful” rise) as the pivotal power of the universe (天下) and the restoration of the ancient pride and privileges that it enjoyed in the pre-Opium War era. But the post-Mao Chinese leadership, however, has been consistently apprehensive of three problems that might

² Peter Gries has discussed the implications of this “say-no” phenomenon in his book (2003). Geremie R. Barmé has also referred to the similar discourse of “Oriental orientalism” in contemporary China in his article “To Screw Foreigners Is Patriotic: China’s Avant-Garde Nationalists” (1996, 255-265).

constrain its power and thwart its ambition. These three problems are; first, undermining India as an economic and military power; second, offsetting Japan's political influence derived from the triangular Japan-United States-Taiwan alliance; and third, blunting the sharp edge of Korean nationalism and taming it to follow the Sinocentric order. China's strategy to contain India includes such recent moves as acquisition of naval bases in Cambodia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, India's rival of long standing, blocking India's ambition as UNSC member and undermining or counterbalancing India's interests or influence in various Asian forums (Malik 2005). China's attempt to test Japan's resolve became amply evident in the summer of 2005 when the young people of China were encouraged to target their anger at Japan and not at the repressive Chinese state through such SMS messages as "Don't create trouble when all you want to do is help! Be patriotic, but don't break the law. Be a solid, law-abiding citizen" (Barmé 2005; also see Gries 2005). In relation to Korea China pursued two-pronged policies, first to exploit the vulnerability of North Korea, keep the regime under its control and impede unification, and second, to undermine the nationalist feelings of South Korean people through its "Northeast Project." Nationalism in South Korea is viewed by China as a major obstacle on its path of realising "restoration nationalism" and authenticating its political imagination, grounded in the memory of the past. This essay seeks to understand the development of Chinese nationalism within the context of the Northeast Project and analyzes the limitations as well as repercussions of such an attempt.

"Restoration Nationalism" of the Northeast Project

The Northeast project is based on the inherited consciousness of the supremacy of the Chinese world order or the primacy of the celestial Empire in a hierarchical world order. As is well known, Confucian historiography emphasized the significance of China as a moral exemplar and political overlord of the constellation of barbarian states on its border. No matter how nominal and tenuous the tributary ties between China and its contigal kingdoms in history, the Chinese reckoned those lands as parts of the Chinese

Cultural world and under the moral guardianship of the “Son of Heaven.”

We find reflection of this inherited consciousness in the political thoughts of most of the nationalist leaders of modern China. In one of his lectures Sun Yat-sen arrayed Japan’s seizure of Korea and Formosa, the fall of Annam to the French forces, the Russian appropriation of land across the Amur river and even such remote tributary states as Loochoo (Ryukyu), Siam, Burma, and Java as China’s territorial losses. Li Rui in his book on Mao entitled *Mao Zedong tongzhi chuqi geming huodong* (Early Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Mao) relates how Mao was moved after reading a patriotic booklet which described China’s loss of Korea and Taiwan to Japan and its loss of suzerainty over Annam and Burma. He said, “When I read about all this, I was very worried about the future of my motherland” (Li Rui 1957). At the turn of the century the Chinese mind under the influence of the Confucian historiography found it difficult to reconcile to the reality of a distinct Korean identity, despite the fact that China’s interference in the political process of the Korean peninsula was never a norm but an exception.

The Chinese scholars belonging to the Northeast Project demonstrate the same Sinocentric consciousness. They mostly cite the evidence of tribute and investiture to argue that Koguryō maintained a subordinate relationship with the Chinese dynasties (on the central plain). They interpret the Koguryō kings’ receipt of investiture to mean that they were officials under the rule of the Chinese state. These interpretations, however, disregard the historical character of this institution which primarily represented a mechanism to regulate the Chinese world order. Furthermore, the inconsistency of the contention of Chinese scholars becomes manifest when the system of investiture is cited to justify the indiginization of only Koguryō and not the other states like Japan and Vietnam that were part of the Chinese world order in the early medieval period. Sinocentrism or “restoration nationalism” is evident in all the publications of the Northeast Project, including the multi-authored book, *Gudai Zhongguo Gaogouli lishi xulun* (Continued Essays on The History of Koguryō of Ancient China) which sets out to prove that Koguryō was a provincial administration of China and was ceaselessly bound to its suzerain through faithful observance of a tributary relationship (Ma 2003,

3-13, 97-146).

The authors perform this task by selective and discriminate use of Chinese sources and disregard of epigraphic evidence. The original Chinese source makes it apparent that Koguryō made a transition from its status of a weak tribal polity, tied to the Xuantu Commandery, to an independent early state during the reign of Wang Mang in 12 AD. In this year the people of Koguryō openly defied the order of the Chinese ruler to participate in the campaigns against Xiongnu, rebelled, raided and ransacked the Chinese settlements and killed the Chinese governor. Later when the Chinese General Zhuang Yu enticed Ch'u, the Marquis of Koguryō and assassinated him, popular anger against China and the attendant widespread revolt erupted on a large scale which Wang Mang was unable to repress. However, in the book, sponsored by the project, one finds only a truncated version of the event that suited the ideological agenda of the author. The authors just mention two facts: first, Koguryō was a vassal state and therefore, it was ordered to participate in a military expedition and second, since the Koguryō chief defied the order of the Chinese ruler, he was killed. This is one of the many examples of very selective use of data.

Another relevant Chinese work is entitled *Haotaiwang bei yi qian wu bai liu shi nian zai* (1560th Anniversary of the King Hot'ae Stele) by Geng Tiehua, published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2003. It also forms a part of China's Northeast Project. Geng emphasizes Koguryō's tributary relations with rulers on the Central Plain. The book conveniently omits or sanitizes Koguryō ceaseless resistance of the military pressure exerted by various non-Han dynasts of the north who jostled for power, including the devastating attack by Wei in 244-245 and later by the Sui dynasty. Koguryō survived a series of fierce Chinese invasions, because they could not break its tributary structure that extended to Okchō and the lowland areas.

Sound historical scholarship on Koguryō also requires that materials on the state's self-perception are examined. In the Kwanggaet'o inscriptions, the Moduru inscription, and the "Old *Samguk sagi*" preserved in the *Tongguk Yi Sangguk chip*, the royalty of Koguryō is described as a "Descendant of Heaven" or the "Grandson of the Emperor of Heaven." If we look at

inscriptions and other materials carefully, we find many other instances of Koguryŏ's independence vis-à-vis the Chinese World Order (Sin Hyŏngsik 1997, 641-644; No T'aedon 1999, 356-391; Kim Jung Bae 2004a, 13-20). Koguryŏ rulers employed their reign titles, imposed tributary obligations on several tribal settlements, and engaged in open hostilities with rulers on the Central Plain. The project's publications on Koguryŏ also suppress China (Zhongyuan)'s perception of Koguryŏ. In Wang Mang's edict Koguryŏ is described as one of the "barbarians beyond the four frontiers who have usurped the royal title and called themselves kings." While all the Chinese historical annals counted Koguryŏ as an "Eastern Barbarian" outside the pale of China, the Korean sources have been consistent in reckoning it as part of "Haedong" (East of the Sea), Samhan or the Three "Han" states (Kim Jung Bae 2004b), and "Ku Han" or the Nine Han states (Hwang 1997, 168-175). The project also shows ignorance of the recent Western scholarship on the principles and practices of Confucian World Order, and seeks to build a thesis of utter improbability on the premise that China has eternally been a multi-ethnic state and its present borders are sanctified eternally by historical memory.

Korean Sensitivity towards Koguryŏ

China chose to appropriate the state of Koguryŏ not only because the state originated and flourished within the border of the current PRC, but also because Koguryŏ was central to the construction of Korean national identity in the twentieth century. This is also attested by the official Korean reaction to the issue. South Korea's foreign minister noted that his government was placing high priority on addressing the issue, as the history of Koguryŏ constituted "the roots and identity of Korea" (Khang 2004). It is also worthy of note that in an interview with the *Korea Times* Kim Moon-soo, a senior leader of the Grand National Party and a member of the national Assembly emphasized the need for the nation to forge international cooperation and align itself closely with other Asian countries or territories, including Tibet in order to deal with its efforts to distort Korean history (Park, 2004).

Korean scholars of history evinced extraordinary sensitivity towards

this issue also because Koguryō was crucially significant to modern Korean historiography which originated as a radically nationalist inversion of Japan's Orientalist historiography and a counter-discourse of the assumptions implicit in Japan's historical practice during the Meiji period and the subsequent colonial era. Korean intellectuals in the early twentieth century, most notably Sin Ch'aeho (1880-1936) engaged in an impassioned quest for an alternative historiography. Sin's historical writings can be described as explorations of the interpretive "otherness" about the Korean past. They were particularistic histories charged with an intense realization of Korea's unique racial identity and a sense of community. They were, furthermore, specifically addressed to the challenges of Japanese theories about Korean history, and were intended as a means to promote the national self-strengthening and enlightenment movement. For instance, Sin's emphases on Manchuria as an integral part of Korea's geographical self-identity and on Tangun as the symbol of racial uniqueness were an articulation of a nationalist historical consciousness and represented a response to the challenges of the imperialist historiography.

We need to remember that an important theory which governed the Japanese reconstruction of Korea's past was "geographical determinism," which asserted that due to the peninsular character (*hantōsei*) of Korea its historical development was inevitably manipulated by external forces and factors, and Korean history lacked autonomy. Shiratori Kurakichi, for instance, specified that the influence emanating from the continental lands of China proper and Manchuria constituted two of these forces, and Japan was the third such force. The political implications of these Orientalist myths were obvious-Korea could not shape its own destiny, and Japan as a "superior" nation had to bring "backward" Korea under its control and lead it forward on the path of enlightenment and modernization. The ethno-symbolism of Koguryō that ruled Manchuria represented a powerful refutation of the challenges of Japanese historiography.

Sin's theory identified the conflict between self (我) and non-self/other (非我) as the major stimulus of the development of history, which implied that the early history of Korea was characterised by spatial dichotomies between Korea (self) and China (non-self), so that the indigenous culture of

Korea had to wrestle with the imported Chinese civilization (non self/other) in order to retain its independent identity (Han 1981; Ryang 1990; Lee 1996). This explains why Ŭlchi Mundŏk of Koguryŏ who fought the Sui army, emerged as an archetypal moral icon in Sin's historiography, and why Silla's reliance on external force for the accomplishment of so-called national unification is portrayed as "a dark chapter in Korean history" (Sin 1977, reprint; Robinson 1984). It also explains why Sin mounted a vitriolic assault on the Sinicization/Confucianization of Korean society, believing it to have led to a gradual erosion of the indigenous values of the Korean people and the concomitant subjugation of the pattern of the Korean past to Sinocentric moral interpretations. Sin's historiographical framework emphasized the significance of Tan'gun Chosŏn and Koguryŏ, which he believed to be evidence of the indigenous origin of the Korean race, and whose territorial boundaries embracing Manchuria were emblematic of a vast territory of early Korean history. Obviously, modern Korean nationalism was based on the premise of what Andre Schmid calls "de-centering China" (Schmid 2002, 55-100), and as is evident from the above discussion, Koguryŏ was pivotal to this nationalist project both during the late nineteenth century and under the Japanese colonial rule.

In pre-modern Korea Koguryŏ did not evoke the image of "splendid ancestors," to borrow the expression of Benedict Anderson, used in a different context. During the Unified Silla period Koguryŏ did not represent a glorious symbol. Japanese monk Ennin (794-864) wrote that the Sillan residents in Shandong province held an annual festival to celebrate their victory over Parhae (Koguryŏ), and it is also interesting that when a candidate from Parhae, considered to be a successor of Koguryŏ, topped in the Chinese imperial examination for foreigners, Silla literatus Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn (857-?) was filled with rage. When Koryŏ rose on the ruins of Silla, its early rulers doubtless made an attempt to reclaim the lost territory of Koguryŏ. Koryŏ's claim of Koguryŏ's legitimate successor is also evident in an assertion by Sŏ Hŭi (?-?), a Koryŏ general who said to Khitans in 993, "Our country is the successor to Koguryŏ. That is why we call ourselves Koryŏ and we have a capital at P'yŏngyang" (quoted in Duncan 2004, 123; Pak Yong'un 2004). Notwithstanding this piece of evidence, it is appropriate to understand the

early Koryŏ period as bipolarised into a dominant Silla-centered faction and a weaker Koguryŏ-centered faction, represented by Myoch'ŏng (?-1135) who raised a banner of rebellion against the state when his demand for the relocation of capital to P'yŏngyang was rejected. The period of Mongol interference resulted in greater cohesion in the fabric of Koryŏ society. During the Chosŏn period the memory of Koguryŏ as a historical entity assumed specificity, chiefly due to the efforts of scholars belonging to the Practical Learning School (Duncan 2004, 125-130). The image of Koguryŏ as the most dominant power in Northeast Asia is, however, a product of twentieth century historiography. As noted above, nationalist historians of the colonial period used the memory of this state as an ideological weapon in their fight against Japanese imperialism and the influence of their "mythologized" Koguryŏ persisted in the subterranean consciousness of the Korean people in the post-colonial period. China's appropriation of Koguryŏ is partly a response to the employment of the symbolism of Koguryŏ as a backward linkage in the "Janus-faced" nature of Korean nationalism. Tom Nairn defines nationalism as "Janus-faced," "looking backward to a mythical past and forward to a future of development in freedom" (quoted in Aspinall 2003). This evocation of the Koguryŏ-centred Korean past, encompassing Manchuria, inheres potential to generate into a political campaign to reclaim Manchuria and holds appeal to the Korean-Chinese, yearning for liberty and prosperity, enjoyed by people in South Korea. China must also have been alarmed at this prospect, as with the reality of loud slogans "MANCHU URI TTANG" or "Manchuria belongs to Korea" that often resonated at various Koguryŏ sites in China (Choe Wang-sik 2004; Byington 2005). The upsurge of popular emotion over Koguryŏ also led to the publication of a large number of jingoistic books in 2004. These titles include "Koguryŏ : the Centre of the Universe (천하의 중심 고구려)," "The Great Imperialist Power Koguryŏ (대제국 고구려)," "Ah, Koguryŏ (아 고구려)," "Koguryŏ, Silla, and Paekche Ruled China (고구려 신라 백제가 중국 대륙을 지배했다)," "Koguryŏ: The Global Pride of Ancient Korea (한국고대의 GLOBAL PRIDE 고구려)."

Australian Response to the Challenges of China's Northeast Project

In Australia Kenneth Gardiner, formerly of the Australian National University, now retired, and I responded in our own different ways to the challenges of the Northeast Project. Gardiner is one of the pioneers of Korean studies in the West. He was the first Western scholar to write his PhD dissertation on Koguryō at the University of London in 1964, and two years later when he moved to Australia to take up a lectureship in the department of Asian Civilizations at the Australian National University, he pioneered Korean studies in Australia by offering courses in early Korean history. His book *The Early History of Korea: The Historical Development of the Peninsula up to the Introduction of Buddhism in the Fourth Century AD* represented the first attempt in the West to systematise early Korean history in English (1969). Subsequent to his book he published numerous learned articles on Koguryō, including "The Hou Han-shu as a Source for the Early Expansion of Koguryō," in *Monumenta Serica* 28 (1969), "Aspects of the Legend of King Yuri Myōng," in *Austrina* (1982), and "Tradition Betrayed? Kim Pusik and the Founding of Koguryō," in *Papers on Far Eastern History* (1982).

In an interview for the *Review of Korean Studies*, published by the Academy of Korean Studies, I sought his opinion on the Chinese contention that Koguryō maintained a subordinate relationship with the Chinese dynasties (on the central plain) and that Koguryō rulers were merely provincial officials under the rule of the Chinese state. He said:

In order to understand the nature of Koguryō's relationship with China, it is important to refer to an important event that occurred in 12 AD. In this year, when the Koguryō tribes rebelled against Wang Mang, their 'Marquis,' a chieftain called Ch'u, was summoned to the headquarters of a Chinese general and executed. Needless to say, this action did not succeed in taming the rebellion, and from this time onward the Koguryō tribes, although in Chinese eyes of course they remained dependent of the Han Empire, went very much their own way. Thus, in retrospect, the events of 12 AD can be seen as severing the ties of client relationship which bound Koguryō to China throughout the former Han

period; for the greater part of the later Han dynasty, Koguryŏ was very far from being a dependable ally, which it had been under the former Han, and indeed it gradually emerged as the principal opponent of Chinese domination in the north-east. It is also remarkable that Koguryŏ always took advantage of the periods when China was weak. When China was strong and unified, it kept a low profile. In this way, the rulers of Koguryŏ were not at all different from other rulers on the Chinese border. Indeed, Chinese control over northern Vietnam was tighter than over northern Korea. When Chinese commanderies in Korea were overrun by the indigenous Korean states, Vietnam was still part of the Chinese empire and remained so until the end of the Tang dynasty in the ninth century. Koguryŏ rulers received investiture from the Chinese court in order to heighten their authority at home. Kingship in early Koguryŏ was transferred from one tribe to another, and if a ruler belonging to a particular tribe (e.g. Kyeru Pu) received investiture, it helped that tribe to enhance its authority.

I also meanwhile wrote three papers on the religious and intellectual history of Koguryŏ and shed light on the independent identity of the Korean people. In my paper entitled "Rescuing a Stone from Nationalism: A Fresh Perspective on the Kwanggaet'o Stele of Koguryŏ" (2004). I aimed at clearing the King Kwanggaet'o stele of the nationalist accretions of Japanese and Chinese nationalist interpretations and emphasized the need to contextualize the stele within the broad pan Asiatic cultural framework in order to understand its real character. I cited the influential Chinese work *Haotaiwangbei yanjiu* by Wang Jianqun as an example of Sinocentric bias of Chinese scholarship on Koguryŏ. I pointed out that painstakingly meticulous as Wang's scholarship is, he is unable to overcome the predominant nationalist bias. He believes that Koguryŏ was a vassal state of China, and when he encounters an uncomfortable evidence such as "yŏngnak," an independent reign title of Haotaiwang (K. Hot'aewang), he dismisses it outright, and cites the evidence of the discovery of a tile, bearing the reign title of Eastern Jin (for example, Taiining) to argue that King Kwanggaet'o could not have employed a reign title, emblematic of his independent status of the (Chinese) state on the Central Plain. One may argue that the tile in question just shows that some Chinese inhabitants within the Koguryŏ domain may

have continued to use the calendar of Western Jin, although the grave of a prominent Chinese (Tökhüŋ-ni inscription of 409), introduced as a “Disciple of Sakyamuni” bore the reign title of King Kwanggaet’o. One may also note that independent reign titles were used by other contemporary kingdoms of Paekche and Silla, Wang’s argument that *yöngnak* was not a reign title but one of the royal titles of King Kwanggaet’o similar to his title Hot’aewang is not sustainable.

In my paper I argued that the stele represented a eulogy, a tribute of a son to his father. Its reference, therefore, to Japan’s invasion of the southern Korean states and Koguryö’s interference in the “war” was not a faithful account of the historical events but part of the rhetoric of Koguryö royalty which sought to project King Kwanggaet’o as victorious in all directions, as a conqueror of all the four oceans.

In my paper entitled “Koguryö’s Buddhist Relations with Silla in the Sixth Century: Focusing on Koguryö’s Role in Transmitting the State Buddhism of Northern Wei to Silla,” presented in a conference at Korea University in May 2005, I demonstrated that Koguryö was not a Sinicized state, but it was the first among China’s neighbors to emerge as a centralized state by accommodating advanced cultural and religious forms from China and beyond and integrating them within its own cultural base. I also noted that Northern Wei Buddhism was transmitted to Silla and further to Japan through the mediation of Koguryö, and emphasized the role of this state in restructuring the existing clan-based political structure into an effective centralized state on the entire Korean peninsula and Japan. The paper particularly elaborated two points, the Inwanghoe (The Benevolent King Sutra Assembly) and Maitreya cult. My study of the Maitreya cult took the popular forms of Maitreya, including Prince Moonlight (月光童子), as the point of departure. I developed the hypothesis that the Hwarang (literally, “flower boys”), an order of aristocratic youth who were not the incarnations of canonical Maitreya, as is generally viewed (Kim Sam’yong 1983; Kim Yöngt’ae 1986; Kim Nam’yun 1993), but of Prince Moonlight (Yueguangtongzi), a popular Maitreya that emerged in North China due to the Buddhist-Daoist synthesis. The attempt by the Silla royalty to harness the significance of Maitreya to advance the interests of the state was examined

within the context of the accommodation and implications of the idiom of "mofa" (K. *malpŏp*, the end of the dharma 末法) in the mid-sixth century, considered as it was by many Buddhist thinkers, including Huisi, as an end-of-the-dharma phase. Cult activities centered on Maitreya were popular in China in the sixth and seventh centuries due to apocalyptic apprehensions of "mofa."

In another paper entitled "Royal Authority an Legitimation in Late 4th-Early 5th Century Koguryŏ" I sought to refute the contention of the Northeast Project, and based on the evidence provided by the Kwanggaet'o stele, I argued that the worldview and the framework of political organization of Koguryŏ rulers, as of the other kingdoms in Manchuria and the Korean peninsula, was different from that of the Chinese rulers. I discussed the point that material changes in Koguryŏ and the accompanying social and economic development facilitated the transition of Koguryŏ to the level of Imperial Polity in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. During this period the rulers of Koguryŏ start using such symbolism and rhetoric of imperial state as "Descendants of Heaven" (天帝之孫), "Sacred Ruler" (聖王), and "Great King" (大王).³

Unlike the existing model of state-formation, I used in my paper the model evolved by historians of Southeast Asia who see the development of state outside the core locus of the classical state (such as the Central Plain of China or North India) as passing through three phases. These three chronologically distinct phases, according to Herman Kulke are: (i) The local nuclear area from which the political development issued, (ii) its surrounding peripheral zones, and (iii) beyond these peripheral zones the nuclear areas of (originally) independent "neighbors." Kulke points out that in the last phase marking a state's hegemony over other independent state/s in the neighborhood, the designation of rulers changed to "supreme King of Great Kings" (Kulke 1995, 233-235). In Chinese this would correspond to T'aewang (Great King). In the late fourth century when Koguryŏ's control over the former Lelang (Nangnang) colony was complete and annexed Puyŏ

³ Kim Yŏngha calls it T'aewang or Great King order. See his relevant work "Samguk sidae wanggwa kwŏllyŏk kujo," *Han'guk sahakpo* 12 (2002).

and even Liaodong, the designation of Koguryŏ rulers was naturally elevated to “Sacred King” and “Son of Heaven.” In the sixth century when Silla controlled Kaya, the designation of Silla rulers likewise changed to “T’aewang” and “Sŏngwang” (Sacred King). This elevated status of Koguryŏ rulers is evident in the King Kwanggaet’o stele. It is also important to remember that the construction of nine monasteries in P’yŏngyang by King Kwanggaet’o (*Samguk sagi* 18:167 Kwanggaet’o) was significant as a symbolic representation of the great king’s resolve to be a universal ruler, victorious in all the nine directions, similar to the determination of Silla, reflected in the nine-story pagoda of the Hwangnyong or Golden/Imperial Dragon Temple. Perhaps it was because of these developments that a Koguryŏ ruler was invested with the symbolism of King Asoka, an archetype of the theory of cakravartin or the Universal ruler. I put forward an argument that “Sŏngwang,” appearing in the legend of the Asokan Stupa of Liaodong (Yodong Ayugwangt’ap 寮東 阿育王塔) and recorded in the *Samguk yusa*, was an abbreviation of “*Chŏllyun sŏngwang*” (轉輪聖王, cakravartin) and was possibly invented by the Buddhist world of Koguryŏ in the fifth century to sacralise the status of King Kwanggaet’o who conquered Liaodong and even visited this newly-conquered territory.

Concluding Remarks

As is evident from the above discussion, the history of early Korean history, notably Koguryŏ, has faced formidable challenges in the recent times due to the rise of aggressive nationalism in China. The historical project of the Northeast Project is an expression of China’s new nationalism, and is aimed at achieving strategic goals of the Chinese state by providing ideological underpinning to its political and economic agenda. The indigenization of Koguryŏ as a powerful “ethno-symbolism” is, perhaps, a device to counter-balance and undermine Korean national identity and revive the old pattern of the Chinese World order. The Chinese historians belonging to the Northeast Project performed the task of depicting Koguryŏ kings as officials under the rule of the Chinese state by using Chinese sources selectively and discriminately and disregarding epigraphic evidence. The project’s scholar-

ship on Koguryŏ represents primarily a mechanical interpretation of investiture and the tribute system, and contributes towards obfuscating rather than elucidating the historical character of these institutions. As several scholars have pointed out, tribute and investiture represented the forms of China's relationship not only with Koguryŏ, but also with the entire "Tianxia" (All Under Heaven), including India. Particularly after the fall of Han when China was politically divided and its ability to control the states on its border was considerably undermined, this mechanism of diplomacy was no longer premised on the concept of superordination and subordination. Future research on Koguryŏ should aim at providing a cross-cultural and comparative understanding of these issues. In relation to the international relationships in East Asia in the early centuries of the Christian era, the following questions need to be addressed with dispassionate objectivity and in sufficient detail. How did the Chinese view their neighbors to the east - were they regarded in the same manner as those to the north and to the west? Were there any differences in the Chinese concept of the various Eastern people or the so-called "Eastern barbarians"? In what ways was the foreign policy of divided China different from that of unified China (Wong 1988)? These questions will be convincingly addressed when the rigorously critical analysis of primary literary and epigraphic evidence is combined with the knowledge of modern archaeological research and the relevant theoretical tools of analysis.

Bibliography

- Armstrong, Charles K., "Centering the Periphery: Manchurian Exile(s) and the North Korean State," *Korean Studies* 19 (1995).
- Aspinall, Edward, "Modernity, History and Ethnicity: Indonesian and Acenese Nationalism in Conflict," in Daniel Kingsbury and Harry Aveling, eds., *Autonomy and Disintegration in Indonesia*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.
- Barmé, Geremie, "To Screw Foreigners Is Patriotic: China's Avant-Garde Nationalists," in Jonathan Unger, ed., *Chinese Nationalism*, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996.
- _____, "Mirrors of History: On a Sino-Japanese Moment and Some Antecedents," *Japan Focus* May 16, 2005.
- Byington, Mark, "China's Historiographical Treatment of Koguryō in the Twentieth Century," in *Nationalism and History Textbooks in Asia and Europe*, The Academy of Korean Studies, 2005, 147-171.
- Ch'oe, Kwangsik, *Chungguk ūi Koguryōsa waegok*, Seoul: Sallim, 2004.
- Duncan, John, "Historical Memories of Koguryō in Koryō and Chosōn Korea," *Journal of Inner and East Asian Studies* 1 (2004).
- Gardiner, Kenneth H.J., 'Beyond the Archer and His Son: Koguryō and Han China,' *Papers in Far Eastern History* 20 (September 1979).
- Geng, Tiehua, *Haotaiwang bei yi qian wu bai liu shi nian zai*, Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan, 2004.
- Gries, Peter, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- _____, "Nationalism, Indignation, and China's Japan Policy," *SAIS Review* vol. 25 no. 2 (Summer - Fall 2005).
- Gries, Peter Hays and Stanley Rosen, *State & Society in 21st Century China: Crisis, Contention, and Legitimation*, Routledge, 2004.
- Han, Yōng'u, "Hanmal e issōsō ūi Sin Ch'aeho ūi yōksa insik," in *Han Ugūn paksa chōngnyōn t'oejik kinyōm sahak nonch'ong*, Seoul: Chisik Sanōpsa, 1981.
- Kim, Jung Bae, "The Name 'Haedong Samguk' (Three Kingdoms East of the Sea) as Recorded in Traditional Chinese Historical Documents,"

- Journal of Inner and East Asian Studies* 1 (2004).
- Kim, Nam'yun, "Silla Mirŭk sinang ūi chŏn'gae wa sŏngkyŏk," *Yŏksa yŏn'gu* 2 (1993).
- Kim, Sam'yong, *Han'guk Mirŭk sinang ūi yŏn'gu*, Seoul: Tonghwa Ch'ulp'ansa, 1983.
- Kim, Yŏngt'ae, "Mirŭk sŏllhwa ko," in *Silla Pulgyo yŏn'gu*, Seoul: Minjok Munhwasa, 1986.
- Khang, Hyun-sung, "China's Historical Claim to the Warrior Kingdom of Koguryŏ Unites Koreans," *The South China Morning Post* (March 2, 2004).
- Kulke, Herman, ed., *The State in India, 1000-1700*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Lee, Peter H. et al, ed., *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization*, volume 2: *From the Seventeenth Century to the Modern Period*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Li, Rui, *Mao Zedong tongzhi chuqi geming huodong*, Zhongguo Qingnian Chubanshe, 1957
- Ma, Dazheng, et al, *Gudai zhong guo Goojuli lishi xulun*, Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan, 2003
- Malik, Mohan, "When Will China Face up to Its history?" (Part I), *FORCE* (June 2005).
- _____, "India as China's Villain of the Future" (Part II), *FORCE* (July 2005).
- Mohan, Pankaj, "Rescuing a Stone from Nationalism: A Fresh Perspective on the Kwanggaet'o Stele of Koguryŏ," *Journal of Inner and East Asian Studies* 1 (2005).
- _____, "Koguryŏ's Buddhist Relations with Silla in the Sixth Century: Focusing on Koguryŏ's Role in Transmitting the State Buddhism of Northern Wei to Silla," an unpublished paper, presented at an international conference, held at Korea University, May 2005.
- _____, "Royal Authority and Legitimation in the Late 4th-Early 5th Century Koguryŏ," *Koguryŏ yŏn'gu* 21 (2005).
- _____, "Ken Gardiner," *Review of Korean Studies* vol. 8 no. 3 (2005).
- Narayanan, K. R., "Speech at Fudan University, Shanghai," in Tan Chung, ed., *Across the Himalayan Gap: An Indian Quest for Understanding*

- China, Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1998.
- No, T'aedon, "5 segi kŭmsŏngmun e poinŭn Koguryŏin ūi ch'ŏnhagwan," *Han'guk saron* 19 (1988).
- Pak, Yŏngsŏk, "Tanjae Sin Ch'aeho ūi Manjugwan," in *Tanjae Sin Ch'aeho wa minjok sagwan*, Seoul: Hyŏngsŏl Ch'ulp'ansa, 1980.
- Park, Song-wu, "Korea-Tibet Cooperation on History Urged," *The Korea Times* (August 23, 2004).
- Ryang, K.P., "Sin Ch'ae-ho and Modern Korean Historiography," *The Journal of Modern Korean Studies* 4 (1990).
- Schmid, Andre, "Rediscovering Manchuria: Sin Ch'aeho and the Politics of Territorial History in Korea," *The Journal of Asian Studies* vol. 56 no. 1 (1997).
- _____, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Sun, Jinji, *Dongbei Minzushi Yanjiu*, 1, Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe, 1994.
- Suryanarayana, P.S., "On the Right Track," *Frontline* vol. 21 - issue 09, April 24 - May 07, 2004.
- Tu, Weiming, "Cultural China: The Periphery as Center," *Daedalus* (Spring 1991).
- Wang, Jianqun, *Haotaiwangbei yanjiu*, Jilin Renmin Chubanshe, 1984.
- Wei, Cuncheng, *Koguryŏ kogo*, trans. Sin Yongmin, Hoam Misulgwan, 1996.
- Wolters, O.W., *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982.
- Yuki, Reimon, "Shina Bukkyō ni okeru mappō shisō no koki," *Tōhō gaku* 6 (1936).
- Wang, Gungwu, *The Revival of Chinese Nationalism*, Leiden, International Institute for Asian Studies, 1996.
- Wong, Joseph, "The Korean Wars and East Asia in the Seventh Century," unpublished dissertation, The Australian National University, 1984.
- Zurcher, Eric, "Prince Moonlight: Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Buddhism," *T'oung Pao* vol. 68 no. 1 (1982).