Nationalizing the Past: Korea in Chinese History

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In recent years, both the ROK government and Korean public have protested vehemently over the PRC's appropriation of Goguryeo as part of Chinese national history. China's assertions have commonly been attributed to instrumentalist concerns to reinforce existing territorial boundaries, lay claim to more extensive ones, and preempt Korean irredentism. This paper, however, suggests that much older ethno-cultural assumptions and political hierarchies are also involved, and argues that, in approach and perspective, official Chinese historiography of the Korean peninsula has long been consistent with contemporary claims. Taking school textbooks as representative of official viewpoints, the paper charts the way in which the peninsula's history has been depicted since the late Qing dynasty, demonstrating that despite political transformation from Confucian empire to Communist nation-state, there has been little change in content or perspective. Furthermore, it is asserted that this approach is analogous to that taken in relating the history of the PRC's ethnic minorities, and that, where "border history" is concerned, there is a frequently blurred line between Chinese 'minority' and foreign "state."

Keywords: Chinese historiography of Korean peninsula, border politics, Goguryeo, history textbooks, minority history

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I. Introduction: The Trouble with Goguryeo

In recent years, there has been a great deal of international media coverage concerning outcries in South Korea, China, and parts of Southeast Asia over the ways in which a number of senior Japanese politicians, military officials, and school textbooks have attempted to whitewash certain elements of Japan's colonial and wartime past. Far less widely reported have been instances of historical disputes within or between other Asian countries. One recent example of such historical conflict in which Japan has **not** been one of the warring parties has been the disagreement over the "nationality" of the ancient state of Goguryeo (and its successor Balhae [in Chinese, Bohai]), which centers on claims made by the People's Republic of China (hereafter, PRC) that Goguryeo (in Chinese, Gaogouli) was an ethnic minority regime (the Mohe people)

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ruling a part of **Chinese territory** during an era of Chinese **national** disunity. Such a claim has been hotly refuted by Koreans, who regard Goguryeo as one of three independent **Korean** states, forming the distinctive "Three Kingdoms era" [*samguk sidae*], which has been an integral part of the national story since the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa* were written by Goryeo historians almost one thousand years ago. For Koreans, it is unthinkable that this history could "belong" to anyone else, and China's claims constitute "theft"; they accuse China of brazenly marching into history and taking what Koreans believe is rightfully theirs. The Chinese retort that since much of the territory once ruled by Goguryeo is in present-day Manchuria and within PRC borders, the history of Goguryeo constitutes a part of China's national history.

Needless to say, this particular dispute, like other clashes over history, has as much to do with the present as it has with the past, related as it is to current questions of politics, territory, and identity. In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (henceforth, DPRK), the ancient kingdom of Goguryeo is the historical foundation on which national identity and political legitimacy have been built, and it is accordingly depicted as the progenitor of the current regime: fiercely independent, eschewing "flunkeyism" [*sadaejuui*],[2] and defending the purity and security of the Korean nation through fighting against both Tang China and the Sinophile Silla kingdom in the southern part of the peninsula. Given the isolated country's current heavy reliance on the PRC for political and economic support, however, North Korean historians have remained mostly silent on the matter of China's claims.[3] In the Republic

[2] This term derives from "*sadae*," the ancient tributary relationship between Korean kingdoms and the Chinese empire in which the former deferred to the seniority of the latter.

[3] In a Korean Studies Group discussion, Mark Byington (Byington et al., 2004) cites an instance of North Korean historians complaining about China's appropriation of Goguryeo at an academic conference as early as 1993. Seo Jung-min similarly recounts attending a conference in Vancouver in 2008 at which researchers from the DPRK Academy of Social Sciences asserted Korean sovereignty over Goguryeo. As Seo notes, however, they "refrained from making any

of Korea (ROK), it has been a different story. Although ROK historiography has traditionally looked more towards the culturally and politically developed state of Silla to locate the ancestry of the modern nation, Goguryeo nonetheless remains a key component of South Korean accounts of national history, and by extension, national historical consciousness.

This is not, however, solely a matter of identity politics. Underlying the fury about the "accuracy" of history itself is also a largely unspoken but palpable concern that China's sudden claims to the history of Goguryeo could segue into irredentist claims to the entirety of the former kingdom's territory. Should North Korea collapse and China step in, such a historical claim could potentially be used to legitimize a future annexation of the Northern half of the Korean peninsula; after all, as discussed further below, this kind of historical claim to territory has been used by the PRC (as well as by its predecessor) to legitimize rule over Tibet, Mongolia, Xinjiang, and other ethnic minority regions. South Koreans have therefore been extremely vocal in denouncing China's claims, with public demonstrations and official complaints about China's Northeast Project (a government sponsored program to conduct historical research in the region), about the PRC's application to UNESCO in December 2003 to have Goguryeo tombs in Manchuria recognized as *Chinese* World Heritage sites, as well as about the content of PRC school history textbooks.[4]

While Korean fears are certainly understandable, China's motives are, unsurprisingly, difficult to pinpoint easily. The PRC's explicit appropriation of Goguryeo as a component of Chinese national history is relatively recent, and there have been no clear policy statements from the

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diplomatically sensitive point that might endanger Sino-North Korean relations" (2008, p. 44).

[4] On the Goguryeo tombs heritage issue, see Ahn (2006). Since 2004, South Korea has made several official representations to the PRC concerning the "distorted" content of the latter's textbooks on the matter of Goguryeo.

central government, nor have any territorial claims been made beyond the current borders of the PRC; it can only be suspected, not proven, that China harbors aggressive expansionist ambitions. It is also plausible that China is acting defensively to preempt a future unified Korea making irredentist claims of its own to former Goguryeo territory currently within PRC borders and inhabited by a large number of ethnic Koreans; indeed, there is already an active movement in South Korea demanding the return of Gando (Chinese, Jiandao), which was ceded (by Japan on Korea's "behalf") to Qing China in 1909, and is today part of the PRC's Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture. Should such a situation arise, it might, in turn, catalyze demands from other PRC ethnic minority groups for independence or unification with their ethnic brethren in neighboring states. Such a prospect is a daunting one for the PRC. "China proper" (the Eastern provinces) is relatively small, and despite the concentration of wealth in these areas, land and resources of the more sparsely populated ethnic minority regions will be needed to sustain the country's economic growth in the longer term. There is also a deep-seated fear of "disunity" and the chaos and violence that have so often characterized the process of the fragmentation of an empire. Other motives may be located at the regional level. Regional governments, for example, have recently been given grants to work on heritage preservation or restoration. For the Northeast provinces of the PRC, therefore, there is a material incentive to lay claim to Goguryeo and its tangible legacies in the form of tombs and artifacts, and also presumably the hope that preservation efforts and the designation of the Goguryeo tombs as World Heritage sites will boost tourism. Finally, there are academic interests among historians and archaeologists who research local history; it is quite natural that scholars in Manchuria should take an interest in Goguryeo.

Which of these possible national or local motives is the principal driving force behind PRC claims to Goguryeo and other ancient states in the region is impossible to determine, as there is as yet no empirical basis

for drawing firm conclusions. It is not the purpose of this paper, therefore, to attempt to explain these motives, nor is it to describe the recent conflict or to debate the merits and demerits of national claims (Korean or Chinese) to Goguryeo history as these matters have already been extensively documented elsewhere (see, inter alia, Byington et al., 2004; Ahn, 2006 & 2008; Lankov, 2006). Instead, it attempts to broaden the discussion beyond assumptions of political instrumentalism and nationalist polemics (Korean and Chinese), which have thus far tended to characterize much discussion of the Goguryeo controversy, and to explore some of the Chinese **attitudes** and **perspectives** that inform approaches to Goguryeo.

Needless to say, "Chinese attitudes and perspectives" are by no means homogeneous or immutable; "China" and "Chineseness," as numerous recent studies have demonstrated, are not monolithic or essential entities or concepts, but are born of multiple and often competing discourses and collectivities that continually renegotiate and reconstitute national identity and national space. Attitudes toward and perspectives on the Chinese nation and its others, and the corresponding nationalism(s) they engender, are thus considerably more complex and less static than the commonly deployed binaries (and boundaries) of Han/non-Han, majority/minority, and core/periphery might suggest; indeed, the very concept of "Han," which is normally assumed to be a homogeneous ethno-cultural category synonymous with "Chinese," is itself a relatively recent construct.[5] The Chinese nation, as Duara has described it, not only **contains**[6] many "sub-national" communities, but these communities' "nation-views" "are not overridden by the nation, but actually define or constitute it" (1995, p. 10). It appears, nevertheless, that while the what, when, and how of the Chinese "already-always

[5] See, for example, Gladney (2004), Duara (1995), and Hershatter (1996).

[6] I emphasize "contain" here both to imply the nation's constituent parts and the ways in which it encloses and restricts difference.

nation-space" (Duara, 1995, p. 28) may fluctuate over time (whether through contestation between rival nation-views or in response to immediate political circumstances), some important "attitudes and perspectives" concerning the civilized and the barbarian, "majorities," "minorities," us-them, and the limits of nation-ness have been rather persistent, especially in official historical discourse. Thus, although this paper does not reject assertions that PRC claims to Goguryeo are a by-product of the machinations of a Chinese Communist Party seeking to legitimize existing territorial boundaries and/or lay claim to more expansive ones, or to stir the pungent pot of popular nationalism to mask the decay of socialism as New China's dominant ideology and suppress subaltern or secessionist challenges, it attempts to illuminate the complexity of the contemporary Goguryeo issue through situating it within the tradition of official historiography and the assumptions that underpin it.

The accounts provided in school history textbooks since the inception of a modern mass education system at the beginning of the 20th century offer a useful source for systematically evaluating the assumptions supporting official historical discourses since they have, for much of this time, been produced and disseminated directly or indirectly by the state.[7] Although many professional historians have supported official discourses, whether through coercion or through professional or ideological conviction, the degree of interpretative pluralism permitted to professionals (barring periods of intense ideological campaigns) has allowed historians sometimes to challenge state orthodoxy, albeit often obliquely.[8] School textbooks, by contrast, have been highly regimented

[7] For a summary of the evolution of history as a school subject in 20th century China, see Jones (2005).

[8] For surveys of Republican historiography, see Wang (2001 & 2002); on post-1949 historical materialist orthodox historiography, see Feuerwerker (1968) and Harrison (1969). In recent years, professional historians have enjoyed a great deal of latitude, so long as they limit their findings to circulation among their peers through publication in professional journals.

and limited almost exclusively to single, state-approved or decreed interpretations of the past that tend to lag some considerable way behind theoretical and empirical research developments in the academy. Through an analysis of curriculum and textbook content from the late Qing period to the present, therefore—examining **what** has been deemed relevant information and worthy of inclusion, **where** this information has been situated within narratives of national or global history, and **how** relevant persons and events have been represented—this paper demonstrates that despite changing political and ideological imperatives, there have been significant continuities in the ways in which Goguryeo and "Korean history" have been officially viewed in relation to "China" and "Chinese history." It argues that these approaches are deeply embedded in Chinese historiography, and emerge from a set of political and ethno-cultural assumptions that over the past century have come to blend ancient notions of a hierarchical Sinocentric world order with modern nationalism and "scientific laws" of social evolution to legitimize the telos of the Chinese nation and suppress subaltern challenges both **within and beyond** its (imagined) borders. Approaches to Goguryeo and to the history of the Korean peninsula more generally have thus been part and parcel of a larger political project that homogenizes the histories of peoples and states on the literal or figurative periphery of the past and present Chinese empire in an effort to construct an unassailable linear history of the Chinese nation-state.

II. Late imperial and early Republican China

Historical relations between "China" and "Korea" (or assorted incarnations or representatives thereof) are often said—to use a Chinese term popular in the PRC—to have been as close as "lips and teeth". As the metaphor suggests, this intimate relationship has not been a partnership between equals. The Chinese empire was for much of the past two thousand years the "senior state" and the kingdoms on the Korean peninsula its vassals.

Korean lips have not always been strong enough to resist external attack and have required the gnashing of Chinese teeth on several occasions to drive off would-be intruders. Chinese teeth, meanwhile, have viewed Korean lips as something of a buffer zone to be defended for the additional security of the heartland ("without the lips, the teeth feel cold" as the Chinese proverb goes), but hardly central to its everyday existence. Such historical inequalities have, needless to say, been reflected in official Chinese historiography of Korea. In traditional Confucian historiography, the states on the Korean peninsula appeared in Chinese histories in supplementary material concerning the customs and culture of tributary peoples. By the beginning of the 20th century, however, the Chinese world order had been dramatically upended, first, by the encroachment of European imperial powers, and subsequently by Japan, which, like Korea, was one of China's former vassals. The new world order and the historiography that legitimized it had modernity as its telos and understood the nation-state as the only legitimate unit of political organization. This led to a reordering of the past in terms of present nation-states, which were mirrored back in time to appear as natural or organic collectives typically structured along ethno-cultural and linguistic lines that were claimed to have existed since the dawn of time.

The new history of the world of nation-states was by no means a less hierarchical one and was also highly racialized, with those (mostly European) states that had achieved "modernity" at the apex, the "despotic" regimes of Asia somewhere in the middle, and the tribal communities of Africa at the bottom. These views were widely adopted by Chinese historians, and, borrowing heavily from Japan, where the new historiography and modern mass education were already well established, soon began to appear in school textbooks; indeed, many textbooks during the late Qing were either directly translated or adapted from Japanese texts. The history curriculum and textbooks for the new modern schools were commonly divided into two courses of study: Chinese or "own country" [benguo] history and "foreign" [waiguo] or "world" [shijie]

history.[9] Foreign history was in turn (for a brief period of time in the late Qing, again following Japanese precedent) further divided into "Eastern" [dongyang] and "Western" [xiyang] history.

The re-conceptualization of the world in terms of nation-states (actual or aspiring) and racial hierarchies meant that children were introduced to social Darwinist concepts of race and culture at the very beginning of their historical studies, with descriptions and images of the different peoples of the world and their evolutionary status (Huang, 1906, ch. 1). Although in the new political world order, China had suffered a drastic demotion, and even within Asia was—based on the degree of modernity attained—lagging behind its former vassal Japan, it did not mean that Chinese historians and textbook writers did not attempt to glorify the nation and provide a source of national pride for the newly imagined national citizens. Drawing on new discourses of race, borrowed from Europe mainly via Japan (Dikötter, 1992 & 1997), and a long history of regional dominance, history textbooks set out to demonstrate that China and its national people, the **Zhonghua minzu**, were ancient, great, and glorious, and to reinforce the boundaries of the empire as those of an inviolable nation-state. Needless to say, this was not entirely straightforward, since many of the inhabitants were not culturally or linguistically "Chinese"; indeed, the ruling dynasty itself was of "northern barbarian" stock, although by the end of the 19th century, it was fully acculturated and devoutly Confucian. By the beginning of the Republic, therefore, the seeds of a multiethnic conception of the nation were beginning to sprout in order to justify the inclusion of vast swathes of territory under the flag of the Chinese nation-state and defend them against foreign imperialist incursion.

[9] The term guoshi [state history], which had traditionally been used to refer to the ongoing history of the dynasty maintained by official historians at the state History Bureau [shiguan], was dropped. It is, however, still favored in South Korea for its national history textbooks [guksa]. (North Korea uses Joseon Ryeoksa [Joseon History]).

For the most part, the borders were drawn at those territories that had been under direct or indirect jurisdiction of the Qing imperial state and which had not yet fallen under foreign imperialist control. Thus, Tibet and Mongolia were claimed, but Korea, Vietnam and Burma were not. How was this reflected in historical accounts? In practice, the present status of former vassals (as Chinese provinces, independent states, or European or Asian colonies) appears to have been of less significance to historical narratives than their historical relationship with the Chinese empire and their status as "cooked" (semi-civilized by Sino-Confucian political culture and social norms) or "raw" (entirely uncivilized) barbarians. Raw barbarians (such as the Xiongnu) had no "state" and accordingly had no history other than that of "harassing" [*xirao*] China's' border areas, and conquering it from time to time, after which they were "Sinified" [*Hanhua*] or "assimilated" [*tonghua*] by the superiority of Chinese (Han) civilization and became part of Chinese dynastic history. Cooked barbarians, inhabiting "civilized states," by contrast, had their own histories and were accorded marginally more space in history, yet they too were largely conceptualized in terms of their relationship to the Chinese imperial heartland. For the Korean peninsula, this meant that its history appeared primarily in "Chinese history" textbooks, although it was also covered in some "foreign history" and "East Asian history" textbooks (Chen, 1905; Huang, 1906; Qian & Dai, 1905). Regardless of where Korea appeared, however, the topics covered were almost identical, limited to cursory accounts of Gija (Chinese, Qizi), who had supposedly been enfeoffed in Gojoseon (Chinese, Guchaoxian) by sage-King Wu himself; the transmission of Buddhism from China to Korea; the Three Kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla, and the alliance between Tang and Silla against Goguryeo; Silla's and, later, Goryeo's unification of the peninsula; Goryeo's submission to the Mongols; the Imjin War (1592–1598) and Ming aid to Joseon; and finally, the "loss" of Joseon (Chinese, Chaoxian) as one of China's vassals [*fushuguo*] after the Sino-Japanese War of

1894–1895, and Korea's subsequent status of "belonging to Japan" [*shu Riben*].[10]

III. Republican China

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, the influence of the New Culture Movement scholars, who had studied with John Dewey at the Columbia University Teachers' College, became dominant in the field of education. Moving away from the Japanese model towards an American model of primary and secondary education, and drawing on Dewey's educational theories, they advocated an approach to schooling that rejected textbook-centrism, and aimed to nurture children as individuals, and make them better members of national and world society. For the first time, individual subject curricula were issued, briefly outlining teaching goals and providing syllabi intended as the basis for teaching and textbooks. History, in the new curriculum, was to avoid traditional moralizing and describe how "human lives have changed over time, so as to nurture students' ability to adapt to their environment and subdue nature." It was also to "awaken their sympathy with all humanity in order to cultivate a spirit of fraternalism and mutual assistance." Furthermore, Chinese and world history were to be integrated in order to provide a greater understanding of the "common development of human society throughout the world" (COH, 2001, p. 14). The new curriculum intended to emphasize the relationships of cause and effect between events, ideas, and phenomena (COH, pp. 14-20), and to move towards a "scientific" approach to global political, economic, and cultural change. This apparently rather idealistic "modern" approach, rooted in the New Culture Movement's preoccupation with "science" (known in popular

[10] Although this text was published after China joined the struggle, it had been written in 1949-1950.

parlance as Mr. Sai [*Sai Xiansheng*], the companion of "democracy," Mr. De [*De Xiansheng*]), was in practice undercut by the political realities of Japanese expansionism, which intensified anti-imperialist and nationalist sentiment, and by the ongoing battles for supremacy between rival warlords, which meant that avant-garde education policies were barely implemented during the early years of the Republic. Nevertheless, some of the education reformers' ideas persisted and were incorporated to varying degrees into pedagogical thinking about history when the Kuomintang (KMT) unified China in 1927.

The new history curricula retained many older preoccupations with moralizing, but did go beyond traditional chronicles of dynastic rise and fall, and attempted to include discussions concerning the concept of social and cultural change over time (COH, 2001, p. 21). Maintaining the strong current of Social Darwinism adopted at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as actively promoting Sun Yatsen's "Three Principles of the People" (the founding ideology of the KMT), the new history textbooks presented a hierarchical tale of the world that charted the evolution from primitive to modern states and explained the present (unequal) world order. Fully aware of China's weakness, and subject to increasing pressure from Japan, the revised national tale reiterated the greatness and glory of China's past and decried the greed of foreign imperialism in an effort to bolster nationalist sentiment and inspire the young to strive for modernization so that the nation would be better able to resist further foreign (in particular, Japanese) encroachment. At the same time, it attempted to reinforce China's claims to non-Han regions of the Republic through appeal to a common biological ancestry (as "Yellow peoples" and descendants of Huangdi), and to proud accounts of massive territorial expansionism and Sinification of remote regions and states under the Han, Tang, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. (Although the Yuan and Qing were not Han Chinese, their rule of the Chinese empire, and the reimagining of an inclusive Chinese national people, allowed **their** conquests to be conceived in terms of **Chinese** conquests).

In this story, the majority Han were represented as having overcome all other peoples in the region and assimilated them into the "Chinese national people" [*Zhonghua minzu*] (Zhu, 1930, Vol. 1, ch. 2); indeed, in this particular volume, the relevant chapter is titled "Past glories of the Chinese national people." (Apparently, no contradiction was perceived in decrying European and Japanese imperialism while lauding Chinese expansionism).

As far as the Korean peninsula was concerned, it slotted into the newly imagined world historical order both as a fortunate recipient of past Chinese cultural expansion that had helped it to progress, and as a fellow yellow people that had failed to adapt to the modern world and was presently struggling against foreign imperialism. Importantly, it had been even less successful than China in facing these new challenges and had lost its national autonomy, falling under colonial Japanese rule with an exiled "government" based in China. This permitted the old hierarchy to be narratively sustained, and meant that there was little change from earlier texts in the way in which Korean history was selectively described; that is, almost exclusively as a beneficiary of Chinese culture and Chinese military support. The peoples of the ancient states of Goguryeo and Balhae, while not explicitly claimed as Chinese territory or history, were described as being "assimilated" by the Han [*tonghua yu Hanzu*] (Zhu, 1930, Vol. 1, ch. 2). Accordingly, these states appeared in primary school textbooks in chapters such as "The Sinification of the Korean peninsula [*Chaoxian bandao de Hanhua*]" (Fan, 1941, Vol. 2, ch. 7). In this chapter, they are described as "having absorbed our country's culture by the time of Qizi in the Zhou dynasty." In the following pages, the Three Kingdoms are described as having actively pursued Chinese learning, with repeated references to "our country" [*woguo*] and its actions in "transmitting" and "teaching" both Confucianism and Buddhism to inhabitants of the Korean peninsula, and highlighting the particular efforts of Silla to model itself on "extremely advanced" [*ji fada*] Tang China. In the following volume in the same textbook series,

Korea reappears in the context of the 1894-1895 war between China and Japan. Japan, which is said to have "desired to expand" in Asia following the Meiji Restoration "swallowed our Liuqiu (Ryukyu) Islands," and subsequently sought also to "control Korea," which "was one of our country's tributary states" (Fan, 1941, Vol. 3, p. 25). Clearly, the only issue of consequence here was China's loss/Japan's gain rather than the impact on Korea itself, its claim to status as nation-state already forfeited by its failure to modernize and its acquiescence to Japanese imperialism.

Other textbooks, both for "Chinese history" and "world history," trod similar ground. In another primary school textbook guide, Tang "border defense" [*bianfang*] and the "greatness of the Chinese people" are the focal point of chapters that describe the reign of Tang Taizong. In this narrative, Taizong established commanderies in the far-flung reaches of the empire to "keep the peace": and "spread the virtue and righteousness of the center, adjust the feelings of the [local] people, and raise the cultural level of the border areas" (Guoli bianyiguan, 1948, Vol. 2, pp. 5-6). There is no mention of wars of expansionism fought, and Goguryeo is only noted in the context of its absorption of Confucian culture; Baekje and Silla are not mentioned at all. A secondary school world history textbook, meanwhile, gives a somewhat more detailed account of Korean history in a chapter under the heading "The development of Korea and Japan" [*Chaoxian yu Riben de kaihua*], in which, again, the principal theme is their relationship to China (Bo & Tan, 1948, Vol. 1, pp. 44-46). In the pages on Korea, the textbook relates how the original inhabitants of the peninsula were "Yellow peoples of the Han [韓] race" (not to be confused with the Han [漢] on the Chinese mainland). Presumably these peoples were raw barbarians with no sophisticated forms of social organization for the first state was formed when Qizi/Gija was sent to the Northern part of the peninsula in the early Zhou period with "several thousand families" to establish a kingdom. During the Han dynasty, four commanderies were established on the peninsula as far south as Pyeongyang and "came under the direct rule of

China" (p. 44). Only later did the Korean Han people establish states of their own in the southern part of the peninsula at which point they "came into contact with Chinese power" (p. 45).

The remainder of the chapter very briefly outlines the formation of the Three Kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla, their temporary allegiance to Japan before submitting to Tang China, the subsequent unification by Silla and its fall to Goryeo, submission to the Khitan and Mongols, and unification by Joseon. Given the few pages allocated to the narrative, the account is perfunctory at best, and a quarter is devoted to the influence of Chinese culture on the peninsula. As in other textbook accounts of cooked barbarians in other parts of the imperial hinterland (such as Vietnam), the emphasis here is on the beneficial effects of the transmission of Chinese culture primarily during the Three Kingdoms period, highlighting the export of Buddhism and Chinese political institutions (p. 46).

In volume 2 of Bo and Tan's 1948 textbook, Korea is treated again only in the context of Sino-Japanese relations, under the section on "Japan's national power." Here Korea is shown as part of Japan's expansionist "continental policy," with the ultimate goal of invading China; after all, it had nowhere else to go to satisfy its "imperial needs" since "at that time, the advanced imperialist countries had already divided up" the Indian sub-continent, Southeast Asia, and Oceania between themselves (ch. 22). Accordingly, Japan first "swallowed our vassal state of Liuqiu," then "controlled Korea," and after the 1894-1895 war, "split Taiwan from our country" and "forced us to relinquish our suzerainty [*zongzhuquan*] over Korea." Not satisfied, it continued to jostle with Russia over "our Northeast" and following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, took over Russia's interests in southern Manchuria, and swallowed up Korea, more than doubling its landmass (p. 42).

Until after World Word II, nothing was written in any Chinese textbooks about the Japanese occupation of Korea, or about Korean

independence movements, perhaps in part because little was known about them in China and the Chinese were anyway preoccupied with their own struggle against the Japanese. In the postwar period, however, the topic of "weak peoples" and "anti-imperialist" movements, which had been a theme addressed in Republican history curricula and textbooks as early as the 1930s since China viewed itself as a key member of this oppressed group, gained far greater coverage in line with the development of anti-colonial and independence movements worldwide. The final chapters of the aforementioned 1948 textbook thus cover the independence movements in India, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Korea. The section on Korea, given the time of publication (1948), however, does not discuss the issue in much detail, and merely explains that the USSR and USA entered Korea as part of the final installment of the war with Japan, liberating the Koreans from thirty-five years of Japanese oppression. As indicated in the section heading "The problem of Korean independence", it leaves the matter unsettled since the country was ostensibly under the Four Power Trusteeship, but in practice divided between the USSR and US (Bo & Tan, 1948, pp. 135-136). As discussed below, this left the contemporary "Korea question" for the Communists to address after their victory in October 1949.

IV. Communist China

Contrary to what PRC writers have claimed, the education system of New China was not much of a departure from that of its KMT predecessor; indeed, for the first five years, many textbooks from the Republican period continued to be used while the Ministry of Education assigned the newly established People's Education Press to devise textbooks suitable for the new society. Furthermore, it may be argued that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its Nationalist predecessors shared a number of similar preoccupations and perspectives. In politics,

both were Leninist parties that believed in highly centralized government, and both vehemently opposed imperialism while seeking to lay claim to as much of the former Chinese empire's territory as could be feasibly justified, regardless of the inhabitants' desire to be part of China. In historiography, both the KMT and CCP saw the modern nation as an ancient entity with thousands of years of unbroken history; both viewed the *Zhonghua minzu*, therefore, as a hereditarily glorious people, put upon by evil imperialists and desirous of liberation; and both depicted minority peoples and neighbors as backwards and in need of civilizing. In terms of education, both believed that it should serve the needs of modernization, the consolidation of the polity, and the moral cultivation of the citizenry.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the history textbooks of Nationalist China (and its successor regime in Taiwan) and those of Communist China evince a remarkable degree of similarity despite the bitter opposition between the two sides. The chief difference between them lay in the stated theoretical approach to the construction of the past, which in the PRC was based on a historical materialist framework that constructed history as a continuous linear evolution from primitive, to slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist socio-economic forms, driven by changing forces and relations of production and the class struggle attendant upon them. The new framework necessitated a reconfiguration of the national (and to a lesser extent, also the global) past to emphasize the role of class struggle rather than the moral qualities of emperors as the cause of the rise and fall of dynasties. As discussed extensively elsewhere (Dirlik, 1978; Feuerwerker (Ed.,) 1968; Harrison, 1969; Jones, 2005), in practice, even during the ideological zenith of historical materialism, the effort to position the peasantry and workers at the center of the narrative as subjects and agents of historical progress resulted in few fundamental revisions of the traditional narrative of dynastic rise and fall [*xingti*], and the economic determinism of the historical materialist interpretation of history never entirely superseded the voluntarist and moral determinist

approach of traditional Chinese historiography. Although traditional verdicts on historical figures and events were in many instances reversed, and peasant rebellions (formerly portrayed as treasonous) recast as "righteous peasant uprisings," great men and their deeds and misdeeds continued to feature prominently in historical narratives.

As far as minorities and neighboring states were concerned, the CCP in the early years adopted much the same approach as the KMT, but by the mid-1950s had attempted to re-imagine the "Chinese nation" in a more inclusive, and—in principle at least—less hierarchical fashion. Gone were episodes of Han, Tang, Ming, and Qing territorial expansionism [**kuojiang**], which had been prominent in KMT textbooks and were included in early PRC ones (Xinhua, 1945; PEP, 1951; PEP, 1953). Instead, wars between the imperial heartland and the minority peoples on its periphery were said to have been fought only to protect territories that from (unspecified) "ancient times onwards" [**zigu yilai**] had been China's "sacred territory" [**shensheng lingtu**]. Invasions and conquests by the Mongols, Manchus, and other peoples were accordingly recast as national "unification" [**tongyi**] or "ethnic integration" [**minzu ronghe**] movements, while uprisings against the dynasty and separatist movements were "class contradictions," incited by reactionary ruling classes seeking to lead the masses astray, collude with foreign imperialist powers, or destroy national unity. In this narrative, China was a peace-loving, multiethnic country that had never fought a war of aggression nor oppressed another state, society, or people.

In practice, of course, minorities in New China, while no longer explicitly stated to be less cultured or civilized than the Han, were nonetheless relegated to a lower social status in the national historical hierarchy by their designation in historical materialist terms; that is, as "matriarchal societies" (primitive), "slave societies," or "feudal societies," contrasted to the Han who had already attained the higher evolutionary stage of "socialism." Minorities thus required CCP efforts to transform their backward thinking and customs in order to help them

progress to the higher stage. Minorities were typically infantilized or feminized, pictorially shown in exotic ethnic garb as living museum exhibits and backward others against whom Han modernity could be comparatively demonstrated (Harrell, 1995; Gladney, 2004). Where minorities appeared in textbooks (rarely), they were typically shown in much the same light as before, as desirous of the civilizing influences of Chinese culture, and held back by ethnic nationalism, religion, or lack of modern thinking. Minorities have also been implicitly shown to be backwards by assertions that they are good at (**shanyu, shanchang**) archery, singing, dancing, and other non-intellectual pursuits, in contrast to the Han, who have always been shown to be great thinkers, artists, and inventors. Minorities—or the states they historically created and ruled—have been essential, however, to maintain the unbroken line of the national narrative from ancient times to the present, to bridge the gaps during which the Chinese empire collapsed under the twin evils of "domestic chaos and foreign disaster (invasion)" [neiluan waihuan], as well as to prove that territory now under PRC rule has always been part of the Chinese nation. This has necessitated their inclusion in national history as core constituents, but as I have argued elsewhere, it is chiefly "the land rather than the people that partakes in nation-ness" (Jones, 2008); minorities have never been given equal status in the national narrative, and the histories of the states and empires they formed have been mostly elided except for their interactions with and adoption of more "advanced" Chinese culture.

Foreign countries, meanwhile, were slotted into a largely USSR-devised exposition of the trajectory of world historical materialist evolution: from primitive society; to the ancient slave states of Greece and Rome; the feudal societies of the Arab world, Europe, and Asia; the capitalist development of Europe and North America; the anti-colonial independence movements of Asia, Latin America, and Africa; and the socialist revolutions of the USSR, Eastern Europe, and Asia. Although attempts were made to include all regions of the world, this narrative

remained heavily Eurocentric. The ostensible purpose of world history was to "prove" the laws of historical materialist evolution, and also to cultivate a spirit of internationalism, so that the world's proletariat might unite and struggle for global socialism. In reality, internationalism was soon abandoned in favor of the "socialism in one country" ethos, and bar a brief flirtation with an integration of Chinese and world history, the two were quickly separated, with the former allocated the vast majority of class hours and narrative space.[11]

What, then, did this entail for the representation of Korea and Korean history in PRC history textbooks? As in earlier periods, Korea slotted somewhat awkwardly into both domestic and world history: in the former category as a recipient of Chinese culture and a vassal state, as well as in terms of PRC territory, which claimed a substantial area of Korean-inhabited land as Chinese, and recognized Koreans as one of China's ethnic minority groups; in the latter, as an early example of Asian feudalism (learned, of course, from China), a victim of imperialist expansionism, and as an independent and newly socialist country, part of the growing worldwide socialist revolution (South Korea was not recognized). The Korean War similarly encompassed both domestic history (after China allied itself with North Korea), and foreign history, in the narrative of the Cold War and the US "struggle for hegemony." The Korean War was accordingly included in both sets of textbooks.

In Chinese history, as noted above, the earliest PRC textbooks included limited coverage of the Korean peninsula in their accounts of Han and Tang imperialism. One junior high school textbook wrote of the

[11] Despite being influenced by USSR education after 1949, PRC education officials exhibited caution concerning Soviet interpretations of history from the outset, establishing a special committee under the Ministry of Education to oversee history (and Chinese language) issues, and ensure that the distinctive characteristics of Chinese history were not overwhelmed by foreign interpretations. The Soviet model of world history as a framework within which national history should be understood was quickly rejected, and China re-centered in the curriculum (as well as in professional historiography).

"expansion of Chinese borders" under the Han and depicted the Tang war with Goguryeo as a war of aggression supported by (rather than in support of) Silla (Xinhua, 1950, pp. 42-43). Another similarly described Tang efforts to "extend (China's) territory," using the excuse of supporting Silla against Goguryeo to "seize the wealth and population of the states (or tribes) they had conquered, and expand the range of the [land] they could exploit" (PEP, 1953, p. 18). This account of Chinese aggression was soon abandoned, however, and by 1955, the entire episode of "Tang expansionism" had been removed and a peaceful relationship of mutual benefit imagined, albeit with China doing more of the giving than the taking as befitting its more "advanced" society and status as overlord. The only mention of the Three Kingdoms came in a chapter on "economic and cultural exchange between Tang and Asian states," with one short paragraph stating that "Tang China had a close relationship with the Korean peninsula." "Korean music was transmitted to China and enriched China's art and music." "After Silla unified the peninsula in the 7th century, Silla sent many people to China to study…. They learnt many advanced skills in handicrafts….Silla culture developed very quickly during this period" (PEP, 1955, p. 9). Subsequent textbooks continued this approach to the Three Kingdoms period, retaining them in Chinese history textbooks and not incorporating them into world history narratives until the late 1970s in sections on "feudal Asia" alongside Japan and Vietnam.

Korean history's next appearance occurred mainly in the context of the Imjin War of 1592-1598. Here too, this was more about China than it was about Korea, although the events were covered in both Chinese and world history textbooks. In the 1950s' Chinese history textbooks, it was described as the "Sino-Japanese War," alongside the tale of Ming troubles with marauding Japanese pirates. Unlike recent textbooks, in which these pirate attacks on southern China have been depicted as quasi-sanctioned by the Japanese state (PEP, 1998, Vol. 2, p. 168), these early texts emphasize that the "Wako" were "unemployed warriors" who

took to piracy in cahoots with Chinese bandits. The 1592 attack on Korea is portrayed as an extension of this problem, and although Ming China went to war at Joseon's request, and Japanese troops eventually retreated, the war is portrayed as "disaster" for the Ming, with "great losses and few victories," the only reason for Japan's ultimate defeat the death of their leader Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Xinhua, 1950, pp. 113-115).

This contrasts dramatically with subsequent accounts. Within five years the war was depicted in both Chinese and world history textbooks as a great "victory" of China and Korea over Japan. The Chinese history text stated "All Koreans rose up to resist" and with help from the Ming "together defeated the Japanese" (PEP, 1955 [Chinese], p. 61). The world history textbook wrote much the same, namely that "The Korean people of the 16th century bravely resisted Japan and defended their country. The Korean people and our army together beat back the Japanese invasion, proving the necessity and great significance of friendly mutual aid between the people of our two countries" (PEP, 1955 [World], p. 37). This terminology and the fact that the war was renamed "the war to aid Korea" clearly recalled the then recently concluded "war to resist America and aid Korea." Much the same story was being told twenty years later, but with an emphasis on the corrupt feudal Korean government, which weakened the country, brought misery to the people, and allowed Japan to "seize the opportunity to invade Korea with the intention of invading China." Drawing on more emotive language and vivid accounts of violence, which have increasingly characterized history textbooks in recent years, a 1978 senior secondary textbook, for example, wrote that "everywhere (the Japanese) went, they burned and killed and savagely destroyed." This is much the same language as is used to describe Japan's invasion of China in the 20th century. Here again, the Korean people are shown to have resisted bravely, and to have used their (proletarian and peasant) wisdom and skills to contribute to the war effort. Nevertheless, ultimately they required the Ming to come in and save the day.

As in Republican textbooks, the next "Korean" topic of historical interest (in terms of chronology) is again one in which China features in a leading role; namely, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. Here, Korea's Donghak/Tonghak rebellion and Joseon's request for Qing aid merely supply the backdrop to the far more significant event (for the Chinese) of the Sino-Japanese War, normally known in Chinese for the year in which it occurred [*Jiawu zhanzheng*]. Interestingly, PRC textbooks as late as the early 1980s also referred to the Donghak rebellion as the "Jiawu peasant war" [*Jiawu nongmin zhanzheng*], presumably to negate the religious component of the movement and reframe it in terms of class struggle. In this story, an aggressive imperialist Japan is shown in a repeat performance of 1592, seeking to extend its control over what had been China's "sphere of influence," if not under its direct authority, and ultimately to invade China itself. Korea is described in earlier PRC texts as "a backward feudal country" in which "the ruling classes exploited peasants," and "disdained outsiders" [*paiwai*], leaving it vulnerable to foreign imperialist encroachment (PEP, 1959, pp. 1-3; PEP, 1955, Vol. 2, pp. 96-99; PEP, 1978, pp. 69-72).

As with the Imjin War, the language and the context bring to mind more recent events. Emphasis, for example, is placed in the above-cited 1959 and 1978 senior secondary textbooks on US imperialist efforts to subdue Korea prior to Japan's conquest. The annexation of Korea is also shown to have been vigorously resisted by Koreans as part of a mass movement, using guerrilla tactics to fight for liberation, clearly drawing a parallel with the CCP's own resistance to Japan and the KMT, its ongoing struggles against foreign imperialists and domestic dissent, and the Korean War. Indeed, the teachers' guide (designed to accompany the 1978 textbook) specifically states that the goal of this topic is "to teach students about the Korean people's spirit of unrelenting struggle, not only against Japanese invaders, but also against collaborators [*maiguozei*], not only against Japanese imperialism, but against reactionary domestic forces" (PEP, 1979, Vol. 2, p. 83). Although more

recent textbooks have toned down the anti-feudal rhetoric and virtually removed Korea from this war, they have stepped up the anti-Japanese and anti-imperialist tone of the story and have continued to highlight it as the tipping point that put Qing China in a crisis situation, on the verge of being "carved up like a melon." Needless to say, this too has contemporary resonance since the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which concluded the war in 1895, ceded Taiwan to Japan.

The final, and until recently, most extensively described area in which Korea has appeared in PRC history textbooks is, of course, the Korean War. As with other Korea-related topics, this has appeared in both Chinese and world history textbooks, and has been commonly known as the war or movement to "resist America, aid Korea." As the name implies, this war has been viewed first and foremost in light of China's relation to the US. In the earliest PRC textbooks, before China had entered the war, only one brief mention occurred in a world history textbook, which depicted the southern part of the country under Syngman Rhee's "puppet government" as a "dark hell" in which atrocities were continually perpetrated against the Korean people, who finally stood up and resisted when the US invaded (PEP, 1951, pp. 79-80).[12] Once China had formally joined the struggle on the side of the North, however, the narrative turned toward China's role, particularly in the Chinese history textbooks.

Until very recently, all texts portrayed the war as an "invasion" by the US, which "manipulated" the UN into sending troops to "interfere" in Korean "internal affairs," as part of its effort to seal off the Communist bloc and extend its hegemony, with the ultimate goal being to control the entire world (PEP, 1959, pp. 97-98; PEP, 1989, pp. 150-156). The Korean people were determined to resist and drove the invaders and the puppet

[12] Although this text was published after China joined the struggle, it had been written in 1949-1950.

government of Rhee back to the southernmost corner of the peninsula. The US, however, sent its navy to the Taiwan Straits, thereby "interfering in China's internal affairs" through "preventing us from liberating our territory of Taiwan", and subsequently landed at Incheon, driving the Korean Liberation Army back to the Yalu River, "bombing our Northeast" and "gravely threatening our country's security" (PEP, 2000 [Chinese], Vol. 4, pp. 140-144). In these circumstances, China had no choice but to join the battle. As all the textbooks emphasize, this was a struggle between David and Goliath, the determination of the (righteous) people vs. the technological and military prowess of the invader. In a victory of tremendous import, therefore, the people were able to hold off the imperialist aggressor and ultimately to "save the nation."

The world history textbooks take a similar approach, but the context and tone are slightly different. Whereas the Chinese textbooks depict the war as part of the process of domestic consolidation (including it alongside land reform, the "peaceful liberation of Tibet" and the suppression of "counter-revolutionary" forces) (PEP, 1959; PEP, 1978; PEP, 2000 [Chinese], Vol. 4, pp. 140-144), the world history textbooks place the events in the context of the Cold War, as part of "US hegemonic policy." This chapter first outlines US "strategy" to achieve dominance in Europe, then Asia (PEP, 2000 [World], Vol. 2, pp. 119-126). Following the US "invasion", the Korean people "immediately engaged in a war of liberation to resist invasion and gain independence and unification…. [They] displayed great patriotic spirit and retaliated against the enemy forces" (PEP, 1959, pp. 144-145). After the Incheon landing, "the US, UK, France, and other servant countries frenziedly invaded the North, intending first to overrun Korea and then invade our country" (PEP, 1959, p. 146). This prompted the Chinese into action, and "shoulder to shoulder with our Korean brothers, we defeated the enemy," despite its use of "germ warfare and other inhumane tactics." "The victory of the Korean people's war of liberation and our country's movement to resist the US and aid Korea proved that the Korean and

Chinese people cannot be defeated, and that peace, democracy, and socialist forces are growing stronger" (PEP, 1959, p. 147). Although the USSR was assigned a more culpable role in the course of Cold War events following the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations from the end of the 1950s, it is the US that has remained the primary instigator in the Asian theater. Korea has frequently been included alongside Vietnam, therefore, in world history accounts.

Since the 1990s, there has been a gradual reorientation of the narrative, both in Chinese and world history textbooks. Where earlier textbooks described the war as precipitated by the US "invasion" [*qinlue*], 1990s texts refer to the Korean War first "erupting" [*baofa*]. In the most recent accounts (written in line with the 2001 national curriculum), the Korean War has been dropped altogether from junior secondary world history texts, the Cold War sections of which now cover only the "stand-off" between the USSR and US, the Truman Doctrine, the formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and the Cuban missile crisis. The Korean War continues to appear in some Chinese history textbooks, and still enjoys moderate coverage in senior secondary texts, but has been relegated to a more minor role. Although it is still represented as a war against US hegemony and a major victory for New China, US aggression and North Korea's "war of liberation" have been somewhat downplayed. In one teachers' guide, the US "invasion" has even been replaced with a statement that the US "intervened to prevent the collapse of South Korea" (Ditu [Teachers], 2004, Vol. 4, p. 163).

The reasons for the decreased importance of the Korean War are manifold, not the least of which was the establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and ROK in 1992. Another motive has been the effort to alleviate students' perceived "study burden" by substantially reducing the sheer volume of material covered; in contemporary China, the Korean War is simply not thought important enough to warrant any attention at the junior secondary level where teachers already struggle to cover the required material in the allotted time frame. The coverage

reduction also reflects a revised understanding of history (and China's place in it) in which historical materialism has to all intents and purposes been quietly dropped. Gone are class struggles and peasant rebellions; ushered in are reformers and modernizers. In this story, South Korea evidently provides a far more appealing and useful lesson than the ailing North if the goal is to nurture the drive to modernize the nation; indeed, along with Singapore, South Korea (prior to democratization) has been regarded in some circles as something of a neo-authoritarian role model for China's own development trajectory. The Korean War as a Northern war of proletarian liberation thus no longer fits into the Chinese narrative of national or global modernity and only really lives on as a symbol of anti-Imperialist (anti-American) struggle.

It is worth noting that the changes outlined above are more substantial than they appear superficially and in English translation. Earlier textbooks made this war a centerpiece of China's post-revolutionary re-emergence as an aspiring power player in the modern world and the PRC's consolidation as a leader of socialist nation-states and Asian liberation from imperialist clutches; it is quite radical, therefore, to demote the war in importance. Textbooks have also **always** referred to "Korea" as Chaoxian [*Joseon*], the name of the last dynasty and the name currently used by North Korea. South Korea [Hanguo] has never been acknowledged as a state, only as a puppet of the US in the "southern part of Chaoxian". In the most recent textbooks, however, the term *Hanguo* appears for the first time, and South Korea is even included quite independently of its Northern neighbor in one world history text alongside Singapore in a sub-section on the rise of Asian states (Huadong, 2004, pp. 104-105). Clearly, these revisions—in content and terminology—are in no small part a response to the sweeping changes in China as well as to the changing international order.

V. Conclusion: Becoming national

What do PRC claims to Goguryeo as part of Chinese national history have to do with all of this? As suggested in the introduction, China's current claims may quite plausibly be rooted in present territorial concerns, whether to reinforce existing territorial claims to former Goguryeo lands currently within the PRC, to stake advance claims to new lands now in the DPRK, or more generally to preempt irredentism among minority peoples. They are also, it was suggested, a product of a *way of thinking* about "China" and its "outlying regions" (whether geographically or culturally far from the perceived center), which has a long "imperialist" history of its own rooted in *tianxia* universalism, and has been bolstered in the 20th century by the twin evolutionary models of social Darwinism and (a Sinified interpretation of) historical materialism, as well as by particularistic discourses of national exceptionalism. In these final paragraphs, I would like briefly to return, therefore, to the conceptualization of "borders" and "border history," "minorities" and "minority history" from the official Chinese perspective so as to clarify the logic underpinning the PRC's present (contested) claims to past histories, both on the Korean peninsula and elsewhere.

As Gladney (1998 & 2004), Duara (1995), Hershatter et al. (1996), Dirlik (2003), and many others have argued, despite all the efforts to present a smooth, homogeneous, linear historical narrative that conclusively proves that all PRC territory (and a few renegade islands) is and has always been Chinese and that there are pure essences that constitute China's national culture, past, and present, Chinese history is composed of multiple, messy, and "entangled histories" (*histoire croisée*) (Werner and Zimmermann, 2006) that lie both within and outside the territorial boundaries of the state. Millward, for example, proposes that "frontiers" (Xinjiang specifically) should be understood as "process" rather than "place" (1996, p. 119); as the above-cited authors have asserted, the same might be said of China as a "national whole"—

contested, negotiated, and defined as much by the "periphery" as by the "core," since it is in these relational constructs and "interstices," the collaborative exchanges, and mutual antagonisms that cultures and identities are created. Chinese history and the histories of its "non-Chinese" minorities and other subalterns should therefore be viewed as composite and hybrid rather than as separate and homogenous.

Such recognition of historical plurality and the spaces created for the "subaltern" to "speak" (Spivak, 1988) have undoubtedly been important steps in the scholarship of China and elsewhere, but it is important to remember that these complex stories and "entangled histories" are not the ones told in school history textbooks—not in China, and not in very many other places either. As numerous analyses of school textbooks from around the world have demonstrated, the grand national narratives marketed to teachers and parents and foisted upon school children are for the most part simplistic, triumphalist, and populated by "great men" from the dominant race, social class, or religious denomination. Despite recent reforms, which have permitted limited textbook pluralism in China, history textbooks have not fundamentally changed—the grand narrative of China's past remains one of a majority civilized Han (however vaguely defined) at the political and cultural epicenter of the nation, evolving continuously and beneficently teaching or leading the less civilized periphery (social, ethnic, or geographical). While primordialist claims are laid to "indivisible sacred territory" [*bu ke fenlie de shensheng lingtu*], it is this process of civilization and modernization—or to put it less beneficently, "colonization" (Gladney, 2004)—that consolidates the unity of the national "geo-body." As shown above, this narrative is predicated on and legitimized by two main approaches that elide contradictory claims: one that absorbs minority peoples and the lands they inhabit into the imagined bio-cultural community of the greater *Zhonghua minzu*; and another that acknowledges the jurisdictional autonomy of peripheral states, but lays paternalistic claims to them in terms of hierarchical historical relations of

cultural kinship and unequal military alliances. In both cases, of course, the Chinese imperial metropole is portrayed as the dominant partner, and the periphery requires and desires domination or assimilation.

The history of the Korean peninsula, as we have seen, for the most part falls into the second category, since it is generally depicted as a quasi-independent state or group of states, paying tribute to the Chinese emperor, but only rarely being under direct imperial rule. Yet, I would suggest that these two approaches to historical narratives of "minority," "frontier," or "peripheral" states and peoples have a high degree of overlap and differ ultimately only in the final designation of "belonging" to a particular ethnic group and political state. Koreans, like Chinese ethnic minorities (of which Koreans living mainly in the PRC's Northeast, once part of Goguryeo, are themselves an official member group), are depicted as having required or desired "Chinese" civilization. They are implicitly feminized or infantilized through being eternally in the student (led) position, and also through needing Chinese armies to save them from barbarians. As the above descriptions of textbook narratives showed, Korea appears in history almost exclusively as part of assorted Chinese rescue missions; in multiple instances, the Chinese state sends **Chinese** *armies* to help the Korean **people** fight off barbarians or foreign imperialists. Korea, as described in textbooks, thus has no independent (masculine) "strength" and no autonomous existence worthy of note. Although recognized as a "state" [*chaoxian*] in Chinese historiography, it has no meaningful "own country history" [*benguoshi*] (or culture) outside its relationship to the metropolitan center, China.

This is hardly different from the depiction of minority peoples and it is not much of a leap, therefore, to re-imagine the **states** on China's historical periphery as **ethnic minority groups**; certainly, by accidents of geopolitics, some past tributary states, such as Tibet and Dali, have been subsumed by the PRC and recast as "minorities," while some "ethnic groups," such as the Mongols (and arguably the Taiwanese), have successfully formed their own nation-states. China's claims to Goguryeo,

therefore, can all too easily be neatly fitted into the rubric of the Chinese nation, however contradictory that may be. Goguryeo in this schema is justified as Chinese by the presence of ethnic Koreans in the region (they have been designated as part of the *Zhonghua minzu*, hence their territory is and has always been part of China), by the presence of Han Chinese (the territory has been assimilated and "naturalized"), and by the historically paternalistic relationship of mostly one-way cultural transmission and military protection (Goguryeo—like other vassal states—is part of the Chinese national-cultural family). It is certainly unlikely in the immediate future that China will invoke this discourse to engage in additional wars of expansion, but that it has already done so in its "liberation" of Tibet, frequently threatens Taiwan with forcible "unification," and postures belligerently on matters of sovereignty over disputed islands is a source of concern for its nearest neighbors. It is hardly surprising to observe, then, that where China was regarded until recently quite favorably by South Koreans, views in the aftermath of China's Goguryeo exploits have turned quite negative. The historical Chinese empire is, for Koreans, increasingly being viewed as a future China threat.[13]

[13] Favorable opinions of China in the ROK have markedly deteriorated in recent years. In 2002, South Korean public opinion of China stood at 66% positive overall, but had dropped to 52% by 2007. Furthermore, in the 2007 survey, 60% of respondents indicated negative views of China's growing economic power, and 89% negative views of its increasing military muscle (Pew Research, 2007).

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