The Paekche’s Colonization of a Lioa-xi Area
The Territorial Sphere of Paekche

Wontack Hong
Professor, Seoul University

There appears in the Samguk-sagi, a record of the King Mi-cheon of Koguryeo (309-331), in alliance with two Xianbei tribes, attacking another Xianbei tribe led by Murong Hui (?-333) in 319. The records of Jin-shu on Murong Huang, the son of Hui who called himself the king of Yan in 337 and founded the Former Yan in 349, include a statement that the allied forces of Koguryeo, “Paekche” and a Xianbei tribe took a military action.1

According to the Song-shu, “Koguryeo came to conquer and occupy Liao-dong, and Paekche came to occupy Liao-xi; the place that came to be governed by Paekche was called the Jin-ping district, Jin-ping province.”2 According to the Liang-shu, “during the time of Jin Dynasty (317-420), Koguryeo conquered Liao-dong, and Paekche also occupied Liao-xi and Jin-ping, and established the Paekche provinces.”3

The Zi-zhi Tong-jian, compiled by Si-ma Guang (1019-1086) of the Song Dynasty (960-1279), states that in 346 Paekche invaded Puyeo that was located at Lushan, and as a result the people of the country were scattered westward in defeat toward Yan. Then, however, the King Murong Huang of Yan dispatched the Crown Prince with three generals (all with Murong names) and 17,000 cavalrmen to attack the...
defenseless Puye. AD 346 was the first year of the King Keun Chogo’s reign (346-375) in Paekche.

The eleventh-century Zi-zhi Tong-jian as well as the nearly contemporary record of the Nan-Qi-shu state that a Northern Wei (386-534) army, comprised of 100,000 cavalry, attacked Paekche but were defeated by the Paekche army (led by four generals) in 488. This account is confirmed by the Samguk-sagi records on the tenth year of King Tong-seong’s reign (488). In addition, the Nan-Qi-shu records that in 495 the Paekche king Tong-sung sent an embassy that requested honorary titles for the heroic generals who had repulsed the Wei attack.

Since it is highly unlikely that a cavalry force of such magnitude as recorded in these chronicles could have made its way from northern China to find defeat in the southwestern corner of the Korean peninsula without having passed through Koguryeo (in the reign of King Chang-su, 413-491), and also without being recorded in contemporary chronicles, the “Paekche” appearing in the Zi-zhi Tong-jian and the Nan-Qi-shu must have referred to the Paekche province in Liao-xi. The titles conferred on Paekche generals by the Southern Qi court indeed carried the names of their titular domains that sounded conspicuously like some Liao-xi areas such as Guang-ling, Qing-he, Cheng-yang, etc.

According to all of these records, Paekche must have held the Liao-xi province for more than a hundred years, withstanding the animated Xianbei Yan, the ever-expanding Koguryeo, and the fierce Tuoba Wei. Both the Old and the New History of Tang say that the old Paekche territories were divided up and taken by Silla and Parhae-Mohe. If there were no Paekche territory in Liao-xi, and if the Paekche territory existed only at the southwestern corner of the Korean peninsula, then it would have been impossible for the Parhae-Mohe to occupy any of the old Paekche territories.

Very few events that have ever occurred in Korea proper were corroborated so repeatedly by so many separate records in such diverse dynastic histories of China as the Paekche’s colonization of a Liao-xi area. Also, very few events in Korean history were subject to such an insane refutation by the Japanese scholars as these records.

For those Koreans who believe in modesty as a virtue, the
計之則 新羅在其東北 其北亦
與 勿吉爲隣也 王都有東西兩城
號 固麻城 亦曰居拔城 以滿洲
語考 之 固麻爲格們之轉音 居
拔蓋滿洲語之卓巴言 二處也
二城皆 王都 故皆以固麻名之
宋書言百濟 所治謂之 晉平郡晉
平縣 通考云 在唐柳城北平之間
則國都在遼西 而朝鮮全州境內
又有俱拔故城殆 梁天監時[502-19] 退居南韓之 城 賁唐顥
慶中[656-60]分爲 五都督府曰
… 東明爲百濟之祖 自 奴離渡
河以之名地當與樂國 相近考
遼史 奴離為鳳州 韓州 皆在今開
原境則 東明都督府之設 亦應與
開原相邇矣 … 唐書又言
後爲新羅渤海靺鞨所分百濟遂絕
金史 地理上 廣寧府本遼 顯州
… 廣寧有遼世宗顯陵
遼史 地理志二 東京道 顯州 …
奉顯陵…置醫巫閭山絕頂築堂
曰望海…穆宗葬 世宗 於顯陵 西
山…有十三山
欽定満洲源流考 卷十四 山川一
元一統志 十三山在 廣 宁府南一
百十里 … 在今 錦 縣東七十五里
卷十五 山川 二 明統志 大凌
河源出大遼 廣州  西六十里入境
南流經 廣寧 左右屯衛入海
欽定満洲源流考 卷十一 鎮城四
遼東北地界 遼史 顯州 … 本
漢無虞縣在開州間 … 自錦州八
十里至 … 元一統志 乾州故城在
廣寧府西南七里
statement of Choi Chi-won (857-?), a great Silla scholar and
allegedly a practitioner of Sinocentrism, that “Koguryeo and
Paekche at the height of their strength maintained strong
armies numbering one million persons, and invaded Wu and
Yue in the south and You, Yan, Qi, and Lu in the north of the
mainland China, making grave nuisances to the Middle
Kingdom” has been a conundrum.8

The Territory Section of Man-zhou Yuan-lu Gao gives a fairly
coherent and a rather surprising summary of the Paekche
territory showing that it obviously included a portion of the
Liao-xi. The following is almost a literal translation.9

The boundary of Paekche begins from the present-day
Guang-ning and Jin-Yi provinces in the northwest and then
crosses the sea in an easterly direction to arrive at the Chosun's
Hwang-hae, Chung-cheong, Jeon-ra, etc. provinces. Running
east to west, the Paekche’s territory is narrow; running north to
south, it is long. Thus it occurs that if one looks at the
Paekche’s territory from the Liu-cheng and Bei-ping area, Silla is
located in the southeast of Paekche, but if one looks from the
Kyung-sang and Ung-jin area of Paekche, Silla is located in the
northeast. Paekche also borders Mohe in the north. Its royal
capital has two castles at two different places in the east and
west. Both castles are called “Koma.” Song-shu says that the
place governed by Paekche was called the Jin-ping district of the
Jin-ping province. Tong-gao says that the the Jin-ping province was
located between Liu-cheng and Bei-ping of the Tang period.10
Hence one of the nation’s capital was located in “Liao-xi,” and
the other inside the Chosun provinces. It was during the reign
of Liang Wu-di that Paekche relocated its capital to a castle in
South Korea (South Han).

When the Tang conquered Paekche in 660, they
established five commanderies including the Tong-myung
Commandery. Tong-myung is the name of the Paekche’s
founder who originally came across the river from Ko-ri.
Hence Tong-myung seems to indicate the name of a place not
far from Ko-ri. According to the History of Liao, Ko-ri
represents Feng-zhou and Han-zhou, all of which were located at
the present-day Kai-yuan area. Therefore, the Tong-myung
Commandery must have been located not far from the Kai-
yuan area. Tang-shu says that the Paekche territory was
eventually divided up between Silla and Parhae-Mohe, and Paekche henceforth came to an end.

APPENDIX

Guang Yutu

The Woodcut map of China (29 x 41 cm) by Luo Hong-xiang (1504-64) descended from the Guang Yutu of 1320 by Zhu Siben. See Kenneth Nebenzahl, Mapping the Silk Road and Beyond: 2,000 Years of Exploring the East, London: Phaidon, 2004, p. 128.

Di Li Tu


The author of Di Li Tu is Huang Shang of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). This is one of the eight maps Huang presented to Zhao Kuo, who was then the king of Jia State and later became the Southern Song Emperor, Ning-zong, in 1194. The map was obtained by a man called Wang Zhi-yuan in Si-chuan Province. In 1247, Wang had the map engraved on stone in Su-zhou. The tablet is now preserved in the Su-zhou Stone Tablet Museum. (Excerpt from ibid., p.23, by Qian Cheng and Yao Shi-ying.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

wthong@wontackhong.pe.kr.

© 2005 by Wontack Hong
All rights reserved.