

China's Attempt at "Stealing" Parts of Ancient Korean History

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China has already engaged in the massive task of assimilating Korean history as part of its own history via the Northeast Asia Project that was launched in 2002. They had already shown their intent in the past by distorting the facts regarding Balhae to suit their own historical and political interests. They are now putting their hands on the history of Goguryeo, and they will also target the matter of Gojoseon as well as the very origin of the Korean people in the near future. If they are not stopped, a huge part of Korean history will be literally stolen away from Korea. All these maneuverings by the Chinese indicate their current need to maintain control over the Chinese-Korean minorities, but it is also clear that, with regard to the future situations that would undoubtedly unfold, they are viewing the potential for gaining control over the northern region of the Korean peninsula, control in whatever terms that would fit their needs. These actions are also in response to a certain level of the Koreans' biased perception of their own history. In order to counteract their advances, establishing a long-term system of data collecting and training of scholars is highly recommended.

Keywords: Northeast Asia Project, Goguryeo, Balhae, Gojoseon (Old Joseon), ethnic minority groups.

In July of last year, we learned for the first time through newspaper reports that a project, called the "Northeast Asia Project," was developed by the Chinese and already under progress. At first, Koreans had only the vaguest idea regarding the project, but it had the ulterior objective of literally "stealing away" Goguryeo history from the Korean people, who have always believed Goguryeo to be part of their own history. In August, another piece of news caught the Koreans' attention: The Chinese authorities in the Jian area were not allowing Goguryeo remains to be publicly displayed. And in September, we were fairly alarmed by

the news that the Chinese authorities were conducting a massive overhaul of Goguryeo remains to prepare them for being registered with UNESCO as World Cultural Heritage.

This kind of shock sparked debates over historical issues between Korea and China, and it also escalated those debates from a rather quiet, scholarly level to a new level of historical warfare between those two countries. The issue was heavily discussed in several public hearings and also through newspapers and journals. On Korea's part, the Koguryo (Goguryeo) Research Foundation was finally founded, with help from the government.

After a period of heated debate and argument, the public's response to the issue started to cool down somewhat, yet it stayed that way only until early July, when certain Goguryeo vestiges were decided to be registered as World Heritage sites. Right after the news was reported that China deleted the section of Goguryeo history from the Korean history page on the internet web-page of their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the debate was reinitiated. They also started to argue through public news channels that Goguryeo history was and also has always been part of Chinese history. In early August, we learned for the first time that the historical textbooks used in colleges and universities were describing, or were instructed to describe in the future, Goguryeo as having been a subordinate entity to the Chinese-based dynasties for centuries.

These series of events mentioned above, which clearly suggest a certain level of government intervention or support, indicate that China has not been sincere in their promises to us regarding the entire issue, as they were continuously assuring us that the new Chinese approach to the subject of Goguryeo history was being taken only by scholars who were engaged in pure academic interests, and therefore the central government was in no position to assume a jurisdictional attitude over the matter. Even on August 13, when the matter was still being discussed in quite a heated fashion, the ambassador of China reiterated China's position of "not bringing a historical matter to the present day's debate, and refraining from discussing an academic matter with a potential political agenda." The ambassador also called for mutual efforts between the scholars of both countries to support academic discussion and interaction. A subsequent resolution agreed to by both parts on August 24 ended the situation at least in formal terms, but the potential for other diplomatic disputes to occur in the future remained.

Chinese policy regarding the matter seems to have been very much nationwide, in terms of both conception and procedure. Already, back in October

2000, orders had been issued instructing historians or textbook authors to describe the Goguryeo dynasty as one of the minor local entities of China in their historical studies and publications. Such instructions were followed by massive revisions of the contents of numerous textbooks and dictionaries. Finally, out of such efforts, the Northeast Asia Project was born and initiated in the year 2002. Yet, the internal working of Chinese policy is still kept behind curtains, so it is very hard for us to understand the entire scope of the process, or how it operates right now.

Targeting Balhae, Then Goguryeo, and Finally, Gojoseon

The 2003 Yearly Objectives laid out for academic projects designed for the Northeast Asia Project, as introduced on the web-page of the Center for Study of History and Geography of Borderland Regions (www.chinaborderland.com), are shown in Table 1 below.

We can see that most of the high-profile project objectives are related to Korean history, dealing with issues regarding concepts such as historical subordination, tributary relations, border issues, Balhae vestiges, the Gando issue, Gojoseon (Old Joseon) studies and overall studies involving the Korean peninsula. They may argue that these issues were not in any way picked up for political reasons, but the persons in charge were surely aware that the Korean peninsula and its history should be a prime subject in studies regarding border areas of the Chinese Northeast regions. The project objectives displayed inside the table may show a lower percentage of Goguryeo and Balhae themes than expected, but that is because they were already heavily included in last year's objectives list. Project objectives listed here seems to have been arranged in preparation for subsequent "practical" needs, which would follow the proceedings and eventual completion of Goguryeo and Balhae studies.

The ancient periods of Korean history which had direct contact and relationships with the now-Chinese Manchurian (Northeastern) region, include the so-called "formation period" of the Korean people, the Gojoseon era, the Buyeo days, and the periods of Goguryeo and Balhae. The Buyeo issue is currently not generating any discussion in China at all, as it is being taken for granted to have been part of Chinese history from the very beginning (a perception that Koreans do not share at all). The period which first generated a debate was the Balhae period, so that is where we shall start.

Themes	Title of Projects (“*” indicate priority projects)
<p>1. Studies of Theories on the Territorial Boundaries of China</p>	<p>Studies of Theories on Chinese Concepts of “State,” “Territory,” and “Borderline.” Studies of Ancient China’s Perceptions upon nearby Ethnic Groups and Entities and their Modernization Process. * Studies of Subordinate Relationship and Entities, and the Tributary System of the Feudal Period.</p>
<p>2. Studies of the History of Northeastern China</p>	<p>Studies of the Beginning of the Northeastern Border Region’s History and Its Changes. * Studies of the Northeastern Territory, Negotiations over Border Issues, and Issues Generated by the Negotiated Treaty. * Studies of Research Dedicated to Surveying the Current Status of Balhae-based Vestiges. * Studies of the So-Called Gando Problem. Japanese and Russian Studies of the Historical and Geographical Issues of the Chinese Northeastern Areas during the Modern Period.</p>
<p>3. Studies of the Nationalities Existing in the Northeastern Areas</p>	<p>* Studies of the Ethnic Groups’ Group Consciousness in Northeastern Areas during the Periods of Ming-Ching Dynasties, and the Nature of Such Societies. Studies of Ethnic Groups Spread over the Northeastern Border Region. * Studies of Gojoseon’s History, Origin, and Culture.</p>
<p>4. Studies of the Relationship between China and the Korean Peninsula</p>	<p>* Origin of the Ancient Civilization within the Korean Peninsula. Studies of States and Nationality Groups within the Korean Peninsula.</p>
<p>5. Studies of the Relationship between the Northeastern Border of China and the Far Eastern Reaches of Russia, in Political and Economical Terms</p>	<p>Comparative Studies of Policies regarding Ethnic Groups between the Northeastern Region of China and the Far Eastern Reaches of Russia. * Studies of the Chronology of the Eastern Border Region between China and Russia and Certain Issues regarding Border Region.</p>

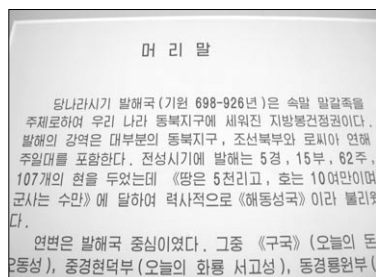
When this author had the opportunity to visit the Autonomous Korean Prefecture Museum of Yanbian in Yanji in October 2001, the Balhae display room was rearranged to show new elements. For example, the introductory panel in front of the display room stated as follows:

The Balhae kingdom (698-926) during the Tang dynasty period was a local feudal state founded by the Sokmal Malgal ethnic group in the Northeastern area of China. Its territory included most of the Northeastern region of China, the Northern section of the Korean peninsula, and the Maritime region of Russia...

According to the introductory remarks, Balhae was founded mainly by members of the Sokmal Malgal (Sumo Mohe in Chinese) tribes and not the Goguryeo people, and Balhae was not an independent country but merely one of the local authorities of the Chinese Tang dynasty. And therefore, Balhae is not listed as the successor of Buyeo or Goguryeo in terms of lineage, but instead listed after Sukshin-Eubru-Mulgil-Malgal.

There was also a history map where Balhae was not indicated as it should be, and the area where Balhae should have been placed was instead marked as Tang territory.

This kind of attitude is a publicly recognized and accepted one by Chinese scholars, and was suggested almost 20 years ago. Wang Chengli (1928-1996) from Jilin Province, and Zhu Guochen (1935-) and Wei Guozhong (1937-) from the Heilongjiang Province were instrumental in its founding. They published a book in 1984 separately, but shared a distinctive similarity in their definition of Balhae in the beginning of their respective books, as the former



Picture 1. The Introductory Panel for Balhae placed at the Yanbian Museum

	先秦	漢	魏晉南北朝	兩唐
東北 西側	匈奴	烏桓	鮮卑 (慕容鮮卑(前燕·後燕·西燕·南燕) 拓跋鮮卑(北魏·東魏·西魏) 宇文鮮卑(北周))	契丹 丹
東北 中部	挾	高句麗	高麗 (高麗)	
東北 東側	濊 貊	挹婁	勿 勿 (勿)	靺鞨(渤海國)

Picture 2. A table showing key ethnic groups or authorities appeared in the Manchurian area 1996: 119)



Picture 3. A history map without Balhae in its place, Shanxi Provincial Museum ed., 1990

described Balhae to have been headed by the Sokmal section of the Malgal tribe and was founded in a vast area as one of the Chinese local entities, and the latter described Balhae as a local ethnic entity under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Tang dynasty (Wang Chengli 1984: 1; Zhu Guochen and Wei Guozhong 1984: 1). The former book was a collection of previous works from the author, so we can see that before China began its so-called “reformation efforts” they had already established certain perimeters regarding studies of the Balhae history. There are certain historians who disagree with these semi-official theories, but the atmosphere does not allow them to freely express their opinions. There is even the case of a researcher who stated that Balhae also partially inherited certain Goguryeo qualities, but such an approach was rejected by the editor under the ultimatum of “change the attitude and perspective.”

Two years ago, another researcher was interviewed by a reporter from a Korean newspaper. The reporter, based upon the interview, authored an article titled “If we do not pay close attention to Balhae history, it may very well fall into the boundaries of another country’s history,” even though the interviewed researcher never said any such thing at all. Concerned that he might probably be reprimanded for his remarks when he returned to China, he delayed his departure for a month and requested the chance to write a rectifying article, but was ultimately denied. He only returned to China after he was able to have another interview with yet another newspaper, which published an article titled “It is a shame that Balhae history is being politically used.” The Research Institute of Bohai (Balhae) History at Yanbian University is currently under of the Research

Institute of (Chinese) History's authority and not under that of the Research Institute of Korea Issues, and whenever the university is publishing academic research dealing with subjects related to Chinese history and its international (foreign) relationships, Balhae history is always "not" dealt with in such books, because supposedly it is a part of Chinese history.

There have been many conferences in the past with themes related to Balhae history in China, but most of them were held inside China and were not very open to foreign attendants, so the actual contents of discussion that took place in such conferences are very hard to come by. Most recently, a conference with a theme regarding Goguryeo and Balhae history was held at Yanbian university on August 23rd and 24th of last year. As usual, they tried to consolidate their position on this matter through this occasion as well. From what this author heard, in July 1995 a conference was held in Shenyang, to discuss their possible responses to Korean scholarly opinion, and in August 1996 there was an agreement established in a conference held in Harbin, suggesting that they should maintain their position of considering Balhae as a mere local authority of their own.

In the Balhae history conference held in Japan in October 1996, there was reportedly a heated debate between Japanese and Chinese scholars over the issue of acknowledging, or not, Balhae's supposed inheritance of Goguryeo culture. The Chinese authorities seem to be banning their scholars with specialties in Balhae history from attending Korean conferences. On a visit to China in May this year, the author heard that a senior Chinese scholar in his 70s was scheduled to provide a special lecture in Japan by the invitation of a Japanese scholar, but was unable to do so because of the Chinese authorities' intervention. All these incidents and episodes are making it hard to genuinely trust the sincerity of the Chinese ambassador's remarks.

But in what would be quite an ironic turn, China's current efforts to negate the fact that Balhae inherited and succeeded Goguryeo will have to come to an abrupt end when China's efforts to label Goguryeo history as part of their own history as well are fully launched. As we can see, their policy regarding Goguryeo history and their policy regarding Balhae history are currently clashing with each other as they are insisting that Goguryeo was a part of the Chinese history, while also saying at the same time that Balhae is not a part of the Goguryeo history, when admittedly it would be in their best interest to support the idea that Balhae was indeed a part of the Goguryeo history—by doing that they would be acknowledging both to be parts of their history. Ironic, to say the least. On the last day of the Harbin conference held in March 2001, which the

author also attended, the Chinese scholars aggressively argued that Dae Jo-Yeong, the founder of Balhae, was not a person with Goguryeo heritage. It was on the very last day of the conference, and it surely caused a heated debate. After the conference, the Chinese scholars had another meeting of their own, and it was witnessed that the elder ones were seriously dressing down the junior ones, possibly for not putting up an adequate fight. But now, they are arguing that even Goguryeo was part of the Chinese history as well, so they are nullifying the validity of their own previous arguments.

The historical texts referring to the heritage of Balhae do harbor a certain level of vagueness. China recognized this pretty early on, and tried to use such vagueness to their favor, and when they think their efforts of integrating Balhae history into Chinese history have been carried out successfully, they will be moving their target to Goguryeo.

Such effort already surfaced during the late 1980s. Li Dianfu (1934-) and Sun Yuliang (1936-) from Jilin Province stayed in Korea in 1989 at the Academy of Korean Studies and published a book titled *Brief History of Goguryeo* the following year, which revealed certain aspects in its early development of efforts designed to separate Goguryeo from Korean history.

The Wanggeom-seong fortress, the capital of Gojoseon, became the headquarters of the Nangnang-gun unit (Lolang Commandery). So it becomes clear that the Goguryeo state which was founded in a later period, and the Gojoseon regime, do not share any chronological lineage.... This shows us that those two identities had a fairly big chronological gap between them, were unrelated in historical terms, and were completely different in nature. The Goryeo dynasty founded by the Wang house during the Five Dynasties period was also unrelated to Goguryeo. Goryeo was the successor of the Han (Sam-han) tribe of the Silla dynasty. The fact that the so-called Goguryeo state was a local entity founded by the Ye-Maek tribes which resided in the Northeastern area of China during the ancient days, and the fact that it was clearly a part of the Chinese people's history is proven by countless historical sources. This entity has grown to establish a relationship with the Korean peninsula only in later periods. (Li Dianfu and Sun Yuliang 1990: 22-23)

These two authors perceived Goguryeo as an entity quite unrelated to Gojoseon and the Goryeo dynasty, and as a result placed Goguryeo history under the cate-

gory of the so-called Zhonghua Minzu (the Chinese Nation) History. Yet, in the case of Gojoseon, it was still being considered as part of Korean history. And they also defined the nature of the war between Goguryeo and Chinese Sui and Tang dynasties as civil warfare, instead of international war.

The conflicts between Goguryeo and the Sui or Tang dynasties should be categorized as internal clashes that happened between the central government of China and a local regime established by an ethnic minority group, which should have been caused by central attempts at control and the local entity's resistance. The Sui and Tang's campaign over Goguryeo territory should not be considered as an act of invasion, and Goguryeo's resistance should not be interpreted as an act against invasion. The relationship between those two entities was by no means a relationship between two entities on an equal footing. First, the people of Goguryeo and their ancestors, the Ye-Maek tribes, were members of a multi-ethnic China. Second, the Goguryeo regime was founded inside the Hyeondo-gun unit (Hyeondo Commandery) of the Han dynasty, was under direct control of that unit, and during the Han dynasty period the Chinese Hyeollyong prefect assigned to the Goguryeo-hyeon unit was in charge of the census and population. Third, the kings of Goguryeo all received titles from Chinese regimes and ruled the population in areas designated by the Chinese government as representatives of the Chinese central government. Fourth, the Goguryeo kings served as vassals, sent emissaries and tributes to China, and maintained a tributary relationship while receiving gifts in return from the Chinese government. Fifth, the Goguryeo regime could not break free from its subordinate status with China and did not declare any kind of independence, and China did not give up its control over the Goguryeo area. Sixth, Goguryeo maintained a tributary relationship with China even after it moved its capital to the Pyeongyang area, so the relationship did not change. Yet Goguryeo experienced expanses in power and also in territorial areas under its own control. (Li Dianfu and Sun Yuliang 1990: 128-129)

They argued that the history of the Ye and Maek tribes was not a proprietary part of Korean history. Such argument was not entirely without some fresh points (Song Ki-ho 1991), but their implications suggesting that a close relationship with the Chinese territory immediately meant the subordinate nature of the enti-

ty's relationship with China was preposterous. Thus, it was true that Korean scholars were not alarmed enough to consider the potential ramifications of such argument.

They also recited the fact that, after Goguryeo fell most of the Goguryeo people remained inside the old realm of Goguryeo or were located in central China. They also said that people with the last name Go, who were the descendants of King Jangsu-wang are still living in the Liaodong area, and based upon such "facts" concluded with the comment, "...considering all the things mentioned above, after Goguryeo fell, a huge portion of its people became an integral part of the Han Chinese, while a lesser part was absorbed into Silla and the Malgal tribe" (Li Dianfu and Sun Yuliang 1990: 209). According to their assessments, most of the Goguryeo survivors should have been transformed into Han Chinese, and the history of Goguryeo would have automatically become a part of Chinese history.

This argument was developed and enhanced by Sun Jinji (1931-) from Liaoning Province. He authored *Origins of Northeastern Nationalities* (1989) and *Studies of the Histories of the Northeastern Nationalities* (1994), and strongly suggested that the entire history of the Ye-Maek tribes, including the history of Buyeo, Goguryeo and Balhae, was indeed part of Chinese history. Currently, he is actively leading the issue of integrating the Northeastern areas of China into the Chinese realm, in both historical and cultural terms. He also stated his arguments, especially in the latter book, which can be summarized as follows:

1. The answer to the question of where Goguryeo belongs should be based on long-term heritage and not today's territorial features.
2. The Maek tribes that founded Goguryeo were part of the Han Chinese and not ancient Koreans. Goguryeo was founded inside the Hyeondo-gun area of the Han dynasty.
3. Before Goguryeo annexed it, the Northern section of the Korean peninsula was the land of the Han Chinese; it was only after the 12th century that the Han (Sam-han) tribe started to live there. The Gi-house Joseon and Wi-house Joseon were all parts of Chinese history.
4. The period of Goguryeo's independence from China, which was obtained by its conflict with the Chinese, was indeed very short, and for the most time Goguryeo remained as a local entity subordinate to the Chinese central government.
5. The successors of Goguryeo were mostly Han Chinese, and the ancestors of the current Korean people mostly hailed from Silla.
6. The campaigns of the Sui and Tang over Goguryeo

were not international warfare, but internal clashes between an ethnic group and the central government. It was also part of the Chinese effort to recover the Liaodong area which had been home for the Han Chinese. 7. The Goryeo dynasty was not related to Goguryeo, and was instead related to Silla. 8. The Koreans today are descendants of the Silla people who resided in the Southern areas of the Korean peninsula, and their current borderline is a result of their advances Northward. So, it is a case of Koreans occupying original Chinese territory, and not the other way around. (Sun Jinji 1994: 286-292)

This book features a somewhat overly tense tone, probably because it was authored after he had a heated debate with North Korea's Park Shi-Hyeong at the Jian conference held in August 1993. He may have been offended personally, but his frustration, either public or personal, later helped shape national policy. According to various sources, in the year 2000 the President of China expressed serious agreement with the contents of his work. It is almost appalling that Sun is reducing the scope of Korean history to that of the Silla dynasty, and that he is arguing that the Northern area of the Korean peninsula had always been part of Chinese territory. After going through many discussions, his arguments became widely accepted theory. The fact that conferences with themes related to Goguryeo history have started to become common since the late 1990s should by no means be considered as a coincidence.

Recently, fully aware of the Korean scholars' criticism of his work, Sun Jinji has been upgrading his arguments. In a paper (Sun Jinji 2004: 26-27) he sent to a conference held in Korea in March this year, he stated "66% of the late Goguryeo territory is currently occupied by China, and 75% of the population are currently living in that area. That portion of the territory and that portion of the population were all inherited by China. Yet at the same time, 34% of the territory and 25% of the population were inherited by the Koreans and are now occupied by North Korea. So it is an undeniable fact that China and Korea both inherited the heritage of Goguryeo." Yet he also stated that "Goguryeo assumed a subordinate position in its relationship with China for most of its existence, so that is why we consider it to have been one of the local governments of China, and do not consider other governments such as Silla and Baekje that way, as those entities were only put in such a position of receiving titles for a very limited time period." This was a response to the criticism which pointed out the logical flaws of the Chinese scholars' argument which claimed that only Goguryeo

history was part of Chinese history when in fact all three dynasties had basically the same relationship with China. He also argued that if such a local government was resisting the central authority it could be considered and labeled as a “local separatist government” by present-day scholars, but if it was subdued by central control it should be referred to as a “local autonomous (more dependent) government.” Also, because Goguryeo showed subordination rather than insubordination for most of the entirety of its existence, it should be called as such. He also suggested that Goguryeo originated from the Maek, Ih (Eastern barbarians) and Chinese Han tribes and that Gojoseon was comprised of Shang people, the Ih and Ye tribes, in an attempt to involve factors of Chinese heritage in studies to determine the ethnic nature of the Goguryeo and Gojoseon population, which was yet another attempt to integrate Goguryeo history into Chinese history.

Past arguments were launched, discussed, and consolidated only in the scope of the Chinese Northeastern area, yet recently such efforts have been being processed in a more nation-wide fashion. And the central government is becoming more and more involved, laying out direct instructions regarding the entire enterprise. The Northeast Asia Project is the most formidable example.

The Northeast Asia Project is a vast national project approved by the government and is currently under way with directions from the Academy of Social Sciences; it was officially launched on February 28, 2002. Its budget is scheduled to be delivered for five years, with RMB 10,000,000 yuan from the Minister of Finance, 1,250,000 yuan from the the Academy of Social Sciences, and 3,750,000 yuan from three local provinces located in the Northeastern area of China. A budget of almost 24 billion won in Korean currency, supplied mostly by the central government, clearly indicates the level of interest the government is investing in this project. Last year, a total of 2,862,500 yuan was allocated to 67 sub-projects, which included projects involving Korean texts such as, *Studies and Detailed Annotations of the Content of “Samguk sagi,”* or studies involving themes related to Gojoseon and Buyeo such as, “Studies of Gija and Gija-Joseon,” “The Research Involving Gojoseon and Buyeo from the Korean Historical Society,” studies involving themes related to Goguryeo such as “1,580 Years of the Hotae-wang-bi Tablet,” “Simple Goguryeo History,” “Research of the Goguryeo Vestiges Located in the Southern Region of the Amnok (Yalu) River,” “Research Involving Goguryeo from the Korean Historical Society,” studies involving themes related to Balhae such as “The Balhae History,” “Balhae Historical Studies,” “The Fate of the Balhae Survivors and Their Integration into Other Societies,” “Foreign Balhae-Related Texts,” and other

miscellaneous subjects like "Translations of Important Korean Articles and Books," "The History of the Chinese-Korean Border: Selected Translations of the Baeksan Jaryo-weon Series," "Studies of the Current Situation of the Korean Peninsula," and "Comparisons between the Economical and Social Situations of China and Korea," etc.

All these efforts maybe considered as genuine academic efforts, launched in the spirit of studying and understanding the history of Korea which currently shares its border with China. But from the following article which summarizes the objectives and goals of the Northeast Asia Project, we can clearly see the political intent of this project and also the fact that this project is terribly conscious of the Korean position on this matter.

Especially, during the last 10 years, the importance of Northeastern China in the world has been considerably elevated both in terms of political and economic influence, and such an elevation of importance has rendered China's Northeastern area a highly important strategic area as well. Yet under these circumstances, a group of historians and politicians from certain countries ("countries" should be referring to Korea: Author) are deliberately distorting facts in their research and intentionally delivering falsified arguments in their speeches, causing trouble and confusion as a result. The historical studies of the Northeastern area and other practical research involving the region are being seriously challenged by these offenses, and we are coming to a conclusion that new objectives should be set to counteract these challenges.... As of February 2002, "The Research Project of the History and Current Situation of the Northeastern area", a huge academic project conceived by the joint efforts of three Northeastern Provinces and the Academy of Social Sciences, and also approved by the central government, has been launched in order to stimulate studies and research involving themes related to the history and current situation of the Northeastern area, and also to bring stability to this region. This project is scheduled to last five full years and will be carried out in every academic department, every region, and every academic area... major themes include theoretical studies regarding the ancient territorial boundaries of China, historical studies of the Northeastern areas, historical studies of Gojoseon, Goguryeo and Balhae, studies of the relationship between China and the Korean Peninsula, studies of the relationship between the Northeastern border area of China and the Far Eastern

reaches of Russia in political and economical terms, strategic studies for options to stabilize the Chinese Northeastern region, surveys of the fluid situation inside the Korean peninsula and influence it would have upon the Chinese Northeastern regions...And in order to accomplish a detailed outcome in all the sub-projects, the specialist group for the Northeast Asia Project suggested five things that should be kept in mind with the utmost seriousness. First is political awareness. This project aims for a long-term stability for the nation, and it should be commenced with concept of the unification of the country, the unity of the nation, and the stability of the border areas being burned into the minds of the participants of the project...

This article is making itself very clear that most of the effort is actually focused upon issues that are at odds with Koreans. This kind of attitude is frequently spotted in many places. On one of the web-site's sub-links titled "Current Academic Actions—Academic Conferences," there is a summary of contents which were discussed at the Second Conference on the History of the Northeastern Region, the Region's Current Situation, and the Issue of Goguryeo, which was held in July 2002. This summary was written by Li Dalong. It clearly represented yet another attempt to spread the idea of the Goguryeo people's heritage originating in China as it tried to connect the origin of the Goguryeo people to the Go-Ih (*Gaoyi* in Chinese) tribe which was one of the Eastern barbarian tribes in China.

Yet, the thing which might be most intriguing is the content contained in the sub-link titled "Hot Issues—The Goguryeo Matter," which includes several issues as the so-called "border theories," and other issues which were causing China some borderline problems that involved regions such as Tangnuwulianghai (Tannu Tuva) in the Northwest area of Mongolia, East Turkistan, and the Nansha and Diaoyu Islands. In this section, in a totally inappropriate fashion, the "Goguryeo issue" is included as well. All of the issues are fairly justified to be included in this section as they are all embroiled in a present-day conflict of interests, but it is hard to understand, although not hard to imagine, why the Goguryeo issue is included here as well.

Regarding this "Goguryeo issue," there are total of five articles currently linked for public viewing. The first article is titled "Goguryeo was one of the Ancient China's local ethnic governments," and is authored by Li Dalong. The author cites four reasons that supposedly justify his claim.

1. The Goguryeo regime was a local regime founded by an ethnic group residing in a borderline region inside the Goguryeo-hyeon area, which was under control of the Hyeondo Commandery during the West-Han dynasty period. 2. The center of Goguryeo's activity shifted several times, but even after the capital transfer to Pyongyang it still stayed under the influence of the Four Han Commanderies. 3. Goguryeo continued to maintain a subordinate relationship with the central Chinese dynasties and did not attempt to break free from China. 4. After its fall, the prominent section of the Goguryeo population was absorbed into the Han China.

The second article is titled, "Concepts of Goguryeo, Goryo, and the Joseonjok Tribe Should Not Be Confused with Each Other," and is authored by Li Sheng. The article argues that these three entities had no immediate relationship with each other, and it also suggests that the present day Joseonjok tribes hail from the Silla people, not the Goguryeo people.

The fourth article titled, "The Nature of the Go-Family Goryeo and the Wang-Family Goryeo Were Very Different," is authored by Yang Baolong and argues that they were different because of the differences in the nature of historical development in ethnic terms, differences in their territories (it claims that the Wang-family Goryeo inherited the Silla dynasty realm, just like the other articles), differences in ethnic properties in the population (it claims that the Wang-family Goryeo was comprised mostly of Silla people), and due to such differences Wang-family Goryeo was not the successor of the Go-family Goryeo at all.

In the meantime, the third article which deals with the transfer of the capital (authored by Ma Dazheng), and the fifth article which covered Chinese studies of Goguryeo history conducted during the last hundred years (authored by Ma as well) concentrate upon objective fact-compiling efforts, but he also points out that the previous studies that considered Goguryeo as part of the Korean history were clearly flawed.

All these people apparently had inherited Sun's perspectives upon these matters and are currently acting as key players in the project.

The thesis published in the Guangming Daily newspaper demonstrates China's intentions even more clearly. The thesis is said to have been authored by Bian Zhong, which is also a pen-name for Ma Dazheng, who is mentioned above as one of the members actively leading the Northeast Asia Project. And

the *Guangming Daily* is a government newspaper. This fact itself, that the thesis was published on a government newspaper, strongly suggests the government's interest in Bian's opinions. Therefore, it would be safe to say that the thesis itself also strongly mirrors the government's position in this matter. His thesis could be summarized as follows:

We (China) recognize Goguryeo and its people as one of many ethnic groups from the history of the Chinese Northeastern region. We also recognize the Goguryeo regime as an entity based upon and founded by a local ethnic group. Our bases for such recognition are as follows: 1. The ancestors of the Goguryeo people mainly resided in the Chinese Northeastern areas. 2. Both the region where the Goguryeo people originated and also the capital of the Goguryeo state are located inside the Four Han Commanderies. Goguryeo paid tribute to the Chinese government and received gifts in return. 3. From Han to Tang, every Chinese dynasty and government recognized Goguryeo as a local ethnic entity. 4. For seven centuries, Goguryeo maintained a tributary relationship with China and did not try to escape Chinese influence. As a result, even after Goguryeo fell, the survivors did not harbor any animosity against the Chinese and even actively cooperated in China's effort of unification. 5. After the fall of Goguryeo, most of the survivors were absorbed into the Han Chinese, and only a fraction of them were incorporated into the population of the Korean peninsula. 6. The Goryeo dynasty founded by the Wang house was not the successor of Goguryeo. There was a huge time gap, and most importantly, Goryeo was established in the place of Silla in the middle, Southern area of the peninsula. The population also comprised of Silla and Baekjae people, who were the descendants of the Sam-han people, and resided in the peninsula's central southern area. Wang Geon himself must have been a descendant of the Nangnang-gun people, not the Goguryeo people. So, we can see that the history of Korea never actually escaped the boundaries of the Korean peninsula, as can be seen from the lineage of Sam-han, Silla, and Baekjae, Goryeo, and Joseon. Chinese historical texts such as *The History of Five Dynasties* and *The History of the Song Dynasty* are obviously flawed in their recognition of Goryeo history as a succession of Goguryeo history. Especially, *The History of Ming* committed the biggest mistake in acknowledging the lineage of Gija-joseon, Wi House Joseon, the Four Han Commanderies,

Goguryeo, Goryeo, and Joseon since the upper part of that lineage should not be placed as such in the line of Korean history. In conclusion, we can say that Wang-house Goryeo and the Joseon dynasty were regimes that "stole" the image of Goguryeo and Gija-Joseon.

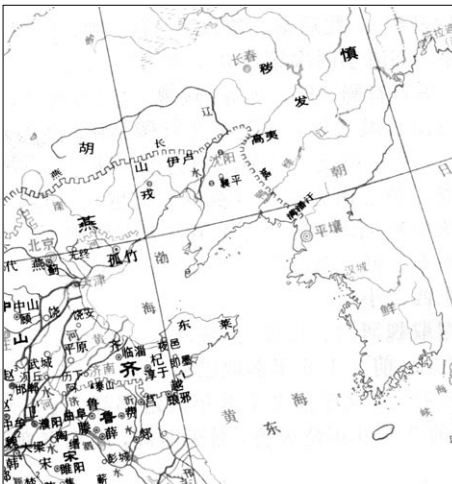
The logic and perspective demonstrated by Sun and Li is apparent here as well, and it is being enhanced. The text of *Samguk sagi* already referred to the three dynasties as part of Korean history, and the Chinese Tang dynasty called the Goguryeo dynasty as "Mahan," one of Sam-han, and the people of Goguryeo as the "Sam-han" people. But they are not even considering these facts, as such evidence is not at all helpful to their cause.

The problem is that this kind of argument actually influenced UNESCO's decision in the selective registration of their World Heritage sites. In July last year, we heard some news saying that the World Heritage registration of the Goguryeo Tomb vestiges inside North Korea was postponed. From what this author heard, there was an evaluation report filed by ICOMOS which stated that a comparison study with Chinese vestiges was recommended. Reportedly, the report also pointed out the fact that there had been certain preservation problems concerning the North Korean tomb vestiges. A Chinese scholar was in charge of this evaluation report. And while the registration of North Korean tomb vestiges was delayed, the Chinese were actively engaged in a full-scale restoration of the second capital of Goguryeo area where the Goguryeo vestiges were gathered in a fairly concentrated fashion. They even had military personnel on guard to avoid any distractions and the Jian area was declared off-limits to any Korean researcher or personnel. It seems like it is their intention to concentrate upon securing registration in their favor, using the fact that the preservation status of the vestiges in China is superior than that of the North Korean ones, and that they may later use their registration in consolidating their arguments concerning the heritage of Goguryeo history. But back then, the vestiges highlighted in the news were under North Korean jurisdiction, so South Korean scholars were not fully "alarmed" by such a series of events.

All these events clearly indicate that the approach the Chinese government has been taking is becoming increasingly aggressive. It is a distinct possibility that in the near future, Goguryeo will be erased from any Chinese map of history, just like Balhae has already been. Yet what is more frightening is that they would probably not stop with Goguryeo at all. According to Sun and Bian (Ma), they are trying to confine the territorial boundaries of Korean history only to the

Southern area of the Korean peninsula, namely the Silla dynasty and other entities which succeeded it. This kind of attitude would naturally lead to the Chinese appropriation of the history of the Korean peninsula's northern area, which comprises the histories of Gojoseon, Goguryeo, Buyeo and Balhae. China has always maintained its position which claims everything now in its territory and every history that evolved inside its realm are part of Chinese history. They also had teachers teach students to view the Great Wall as a "dividing line" between peasants and nomads and not as a borderline of the ancient Chinese dynasties. And now they are advancing even further, right down the Korean peninsula. It is not an academic issue anymore. It seems as though they are preparing themselves for any potential opportunities that might appear in the future as North Korea shows instability in keeping control over its realm (which is the northern area of the Korean peninsula). As clearly indicated in the opening statement of the Northeast Asia Project, the entire effort is undoubtedly led by people who are very much concerned with the events that would surely occur in the post-Korean unification period. They must be very sensitive to what kind of influence and impact would be imposed upon the northeastern area of China during such a time.

If their effort to integrate Goguryeo history into the Chinese history is successfully carried out, they will not hesitate for a moment to transfer their interest upon other related matters, and without question their prime target would be Gojoseon. They have already defined Gi-house Joseon and Wi-house Joseon as Chinese local governments. In *Brief History of Goguryeo*, only Goguryeo history is considered Chinese history, but in Sun and Bian's works, the authors consider Gojoseon history as part of their history as well. On the current Chinese History map, the Chinese Great Wall of the Yan,



Picture 4. The Chinese Great Wall described as reaching into the Korean peninsula

Sources: Guo Moruo 1979: 23, 30; Tan Qixiang 1982a: 41-42; 1982b: 3-4, 27-28; Wang Yaxuan, Wang Hongbin and Su Dexiang 1990: 26, 32, 40; Tan Qixiang 1991: 13-14, 15-16, 17-18.

Qin, and Han dynasties stretches to the Cheongcheon-gang area.

This kind of feature is a result of an attempt designed to negate the theory of Gojoseon ever having been located in the Manchurian area, and it tries to make sure that everyone believes that even the Cheongcheon-gang area was under direct Chinese influence, and that Gojoseon was only occupying regions in the Southern area of that river. But as said above, recently they are beginning to claim Gojoseon history as part of their history as well, so they are arguing that the southern area of the Cheongcheon River also belonged to Chinese territory. This kind of approach is absurd to say the least. And the fact that this kind of perspective is strongly supported and even led by senior scholars, and not amateur researchers, is appalling.

China's Policy on Ethnic Minority Groups and the So-Called "Great Han Mentality"

China's policy will not stop at Balhae and Goguryeo, it will continue to affect and have influence upon the history of Gojoseon and ultimately the perception of the entire Korean history, either the perspectives of the domestic population, or those of the foreign countries. One of the most primary bases for this policy is China's policy regarding ethnic minority groups residing in its territory.

As we all know, China currently consists of a total of 56 ethnic groups. According to a census report from the year 2000, the population of China is over 1,260,000,000. 91.9% of them are from the Han Chinese group, while the other 55 ethnic minority groups only occupy 8.1% of the population. On the other hand, those 55 groups, while occupy only a fraction of the population, they occupy 63.7% of the entire regional space. If the ethnic minority groups manage to detach themselves from China, China would be forced into a situation in which 91.9% of their current population would be left to live in merely 36.3% of their available land mass. This is surely a dilemma for the Chinese leadership. The Uygur and Tibetan minorities in the western areas are those which are currently engaged in a fierce movement aiming for separation. In the past, Inner Mongolia was also active in their separative cause, but is somewhat quiet these days. Instead, there are rumors involving the Joseonjok (Korean) minority that Chinese authorities put them under close surveillance as they were concerned of problems that might surface in case the Korean peninsula finally managed to embrace unified leadership at some future point. There was an early incident in

which former president Kim Yeong-sam visited China yet was denied the opportunity to have a meeting with Joseonjok representatives. China calls the overseas Chinese living in Korea their brothers. But they do not allow the Joseonjok members to be recognized as brothers of the Korean people. The Joseonjok members can call Korea “*moguk*” (their mother land), or “*goguk*” (their old home), but are not allowed to call Korea “*joguk*” (their native land). They are keeping the Joseonjok members under close scrutiny.

The Special Act on Overseas Brothers, which had some trouble getting passed and is currently having problems in doing its job as it was originally intended, represents a distinctive example of China’s discreet intervention based upon their own resentment toward certain things going on in Korea, which in turn currently causes some trouble in Korea’s domestic policy making process. When this law was being discussed, China argued and protested that this law supported a rather broad definition of “foreign brothers of the Korean people” and by doing so it represented a potential instigator for the nationalist mentality of the Joseonjok living inside China. So, before this law was declared effective in 1999, the Korean government had no choice but to limit the definition of “foreign brothers,” to Korean people who left for foreign lands only after the government’s foundation in August 15th, 1948. As a result, the Joseonjok people in China, the Goryeo people in Russia, and Korean people currently living in Japan after being relocated during the Japanese Occupation period, who were all forced to leave Korea against their will during a very difficult time in Korean history, are all excluded from this definition of foreign brotherhood, and only the Korean people who left for the U.S. are included in a fairly unfair fashion. Fortunately, such problems were finally acknowledged in November 2001, as the law was deemed “not compatible” with the Constitution and efforts to amend the law to include the formerly excluded Korean people are currently in progress. Yet still, congressmen who were scheduled to visit China to gather information that would be crucial for their amendment efforts were reportedly denied visas several times and then their efforts were frequently thwarted by agents sent from the Chinese government to the extent that they were unable to accomplish certain goals that they originally aimed for in their visits.

Not only that, but our government’s attempt to invite the Dalai Lama, who is currently leading the Tibetan Government in Exile, was also dropped because of Chinese responses. Most astonishingly, the Dalai Lama was even denied passages via Seoul on his way to Mongolia in August 2002 because airlines in Korea refused to issue a boarding pass for security reasons. All these occur-

rences painfully remind us that we are sometimes too conscious of Chinese responses.

From the above, we can see how Chinese policies are aggressively being crafted and carried out. The Preamble of the Chinese Constitution states that "The People's Republic of China is a unitary multi-national state created jointly by the people of all its nationalities. Socialist relations of equality, unity, and mutual assistance have been established among the nationalities and will continue to be strengthened. In the struggle to safeguard the unity of the nationalities, it is necessary to combat big-nation chauvinism, mainly Han chauvinism, and to combat local national chauvinism. The state will do its utmost to promote the common prosperity of all the nationalities." According to this statement, China is a multi-ethnic nation, and resists both the separatists and the Great Han Mentality. But in reality, it is actually aiming for the so-called Great Han Mentality, and not rejecting it. Fighting the Great Han Mentality is an empty catch phrase. The government's main target is local separatism, which is considered to be yet another synonym for Nationalism. To properly understand all these concepts, we should have a look inside the changes made to China's policy regarding nationalities and ethnic groups.

The first comment regarding the ethnic minority groups from the Chinese Communist leadership came in July 1922. Three Bu units, the Mongol, Tibet, and Huijiang areas were declared as democratic autonomous entities. At the same time, the foundation of a Chinese Federated Republic, which would include the previously mentioned areas, was declared, based upon the concept of Liberal Federation, with National independence and Federal administration as its virtues. In November 1931, the Chinese Soviet Constitution also stated, "(The government) recognizes and approves the independent and autonomous nature of the ethnic minority groups, and also approves their rights of detaching themselves from China to form an independent country." But in October 1938, the guarantee of independent decision making supported in earlier policies was replaced with the mere approval of autonomous control in Mao Zedong's political report, and the Great Han Mentality was severely criticized in the same report, in order to pacify ethnic minority groups. In May 1947, the Inner Mongolian area declared themselves as an autonomous government, and in July 1949 the Quhan (Expelling the Han Chinese) Incident occurred in Tibet. These events led to the nullification of the prior approval of ethnic groups' independence in decision making and approvals regarding federal administration. Instead, the government chose to merely support and guarantee ethnic auto-

my, and in October of the next month, the Chinese government was founded. In October 1950, the People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet, and in the Chinese Constitution that was enacted in September 1954, Han chauvinism (Great Han Mentality) and local national chauvinism (local separatism) was equally denounced, leading to a legal completion of China's policy regarding ethnic autonomy.

As we can see, at first they approved and acknowledged the independent decision making of the ethnic groups and also their rights of separation, but their policy shifted to only acknowledging and supporting their autonomous authorities, and bashing the Great Han mentality was only devised and placed there in order to pacify them. So, equality among ethnic groups was not that well grounded, even at the start.

China, in other words, is not a unified nation comprising 56 ethnic groups as claimed in its Constitution charter but rather a unified multi-ethnic nation led by the Han Chinese. For example, Wang Chengli stated in the early chapters of his book that, "Balhae history occupies an important chapter in the multi-ethnic history of our country which has been led by the Han Chinese." The Chinese history textbooks are highlighting and emphasizing the fact that the Chinese Tang dynasty and Balhae shared many cultural aspects [the so-called "Cheshu Ben-Yijia (車書本一家: Cultural Merging to be One)" concept]. The same attitude is also shown in references to Tufan, the origin of Tibet, within the so-called "Hetong Wei-yijia (和同爲一家: Merging to be one)" concept as well, which cites the fact that a Chinese Tang princess married into the Tufan royal family. Government separateness is not an issue here, according to this logic. As long as they share an inter-marital connection or relation, they are members of the same family, and the Chinese authorities are making this very clear in their historical researches and education.

Sun Jinji's conclusion, after his overall comments upon the origins and heritage of the ethnic groups residing in China, is as follows:

Regardless of the intentions or the complex nature of activities of the ethnic groups currently residing in the Chinese Northeastern area, they would ultimately converge with each other and form a unified Chinese Nation.. the ethnic groups currently exist as independent entities, but they will all eventually be assimilated into the Zhonghua Minzu, considering the current status and pace of the merging process. According to history, the Han Chinese always served as a major force tying groups together in

times of grand unification throughout the Chinese history.¹ (Sun Jinji 1992: 457-459)

He is literally stating that all ethnic minority groups would eventually be assimilated into the Han Chinese based platform of China. This statement, or sentiment, is a weird conglomeration of Stalin's theory of nationality and the above-mentioned "Great Han Mentality." Stalin predicted that nations, or nationalities for that matter, would eventually vanish, or be rendered obsolete. Then, the Chinese interpreted this theory solely for their benefit, and predicted all nationalities except the Han Chinese group would become extinct. What embarrasses us mostly is the issue of "majority." They are simply saying that when an origin is determined or a heritage defined, the majority in terms of population composition should be considered the foremost factor above anything else. To back up this kind of attitude, they consider factors relatively minor in a rather "heavy" fashion. For example, they suggest that the entire country's heritage based upon the origin or heritage of a leader who was in the minority group himself is not correct or sound or simply right because such approaches would not have been in the spirit of Marxism. In this kind of argument, they are once again linking these two seemingly unrelated ends together to have them serve their own questionable claims. In this case, Marxism is being used to oppress and somewhat negate the qualities of the minority groups and to serve a newly resurrected traditional Sino-centrism. As I have heard, similar logic is also being applied to others situations, such as in nearby Russia as well.

So it is only natural for the Chinese to keep a close eye on the Joseonjok society, as it is, in their eyes, a perfect candidate from which to aim to break-free. And they are not just keeping an eye upon them; they have already begun their advances upon the histories of Balhae, Goguryeo, and Gojoseon.

The Jian Conference, and after That

One thing that we should remember is that we are also partially responsible for all this. It was North Korea's Juche Idea which made China nervous in the first

1. See also the translation published in the Journal of Koguryo Studies Vol. 15 (2003, Seoul: Association of Koguryo Studies).

place. In the past, China and North Korea have been very tight allies in their efforts against the U.S. advance. During the time period of 1963 to 1965, they organized a joint committee of expedition and excavated and investigated Manchurian area vestiges together. They found that artifacts were shared between those two countries as tokens of friendship. But before long, things started to turn ugly. Using the data acquired around this time, North Korea managed to establish a historical structure of their own based on Juche ideology which involved the history of Gojoseon, Goguryeo, and Balhae, and caused some irritation for the Chinese as a result. The Chinese were furious of the fact that, despite the agreement between the two countries to issue a joint report which would outline the results of their allied academic efforts, North Korea willfully issued a published report of its own which only served their best interests, particularly at a time when China was embroiled in the ravages caused by the Cultural Revolution. Such indignation on the Chinese part literally made any subsequent attempt aimed at joint operations in academic terms “impossible.” Yet North Korea continued to enhance their logic and concepts concerning the so-called Juche ideology. China was further annoyed to say the least. So, during the 1980s, the Chinese started their own version of historical studies involving Balhae and Goguryeo as a response to what seemed like a “North Korean” challenge.

After 1992, Korea and China established official relations and the number of Koreans visiting China increased naturally. In August 1993, Scholars from both South and North Korea and also China and Japan, were all gathered at the International Conference of Goguryeo Culture at Jian City in Jilin Province. There was a pre-arranged agreement of not commenting upon the issue of Goguryeo’s historical heritage. Yet on the first day of discussion, Park Shi-Hyeong from North Korea stated in no uncertain terms that he could not understand why China was claiming the history of Gojoseon and Goguryeo as their own when their arguments were solely based upon the fact that the territory those entities had occupied was currently under the jurisdiction of China. He also mentioned the heroic and brave nature of Goguryeo which stood up against the mighty Chinese dynasties. Sun Jinji was outraged, and was reported to have had a stroke while furiously responding to Park’s remarks (the thesis mentioned above, from 1994, was authored roughly around this time). After this incident, all discussions cut short, and a scheduled section of the overall debate was cancelled. But the Chinese were determined not to let this incident go unnoticed or unresponded. They issued instructions banning any other future international

conferences from being held with themes related to Goguryeo or Balhae. So, after this conference, reportedly, there have only been domestic conferences held inside China.

When the Jian conference was held, the Goguryeo tombs famous for their mural paintings were also opened to the public. They were usually heavily guarded behind iron doors for protection, yet it was decided that they be opened for the occasion. And then the Chosun Ilbo newspaper, based on the photographs taken by their reporters inside a total of seven tombs, created a tour of the country that was titled, "Goguryeo!! The Jiban (Jian) tombs featuring mural paintings from the past 1,500 years" throughout the country for 235 days, starting from November of that year. The tour was extremely successful. A total of 3.5 million people saw and enjoyed this exhibition tour, but this kind of buzz also heavily annoyed the Chinese authorities, forcing them to punish and reprimand some of their own scholars who were involved in the process of opening the tomb vestiges to the public.

All these incidents led to the Chinese policy of "closing down," and some of the nationalists of our own country have certainly not helped the situation either. By the early 1980s, backed by government support, some amateur researchers were publicly claiming that the territory of Dangun Joseon had even included the current Beijing area and that Silla unification had also encompassed the Manchurian area; they received calls from everywhere asking them to provide lectures, and those who asked also included the Korean military. There was even an incident in which a writing, hung at the office chamber of the Korean Military Academy's headmaster, showing a dictum saying, "Reclaim Manchuria" embarrassingly astonished high-ranking Chinese visitors. And in 1995, a nationalist group from Korea marched in the Manchurian area in black uniforms and caused some incidents in which fights occurred with Chinese police over flag issues on board their boats.

At this point, China started to openly express its discomfort over the fact that the Koreans were deliberately trying to instigate a sense of national heritage amongst the Joseonjok and were openly claiming the recovery of past territories. In Yanbian, sign boards with contents reminiscent of Korea were strictly banned. The song "Seongu-ja" (The Pioneer) was banned, tablets commemorating the poems written by Yun Dong-Ju and Kim Jeong-Suk, wife of Kim Il-Sung, were taken down, and using video cameras around the Cheonji lake of Mt. Baekdu was prohibited. The newspapers published in 1995 were filled with such kinds of articles. Sun also pointed out that some "preposterous" Korean scholars were

claiming a large chunk of the Chinese territory as their own. He also criticised some actions taken by Korean congressmen (Sun Jinji 2002: 26). His remarks, as well as his words included in the foreword of the Northeast Asia Project, are in no way made at the personal level.

There were other incidents that irritated China even more. Goguryeo mural paintings inside the Jangcheon Tomb No. 1 and 2 were stolen in September 1996. The protective iron doors were broken and most of the paintings were plundered; the Chinese authorities suspected that Koreans may have been behind it. Later, Jangcheon tomb No.1 was robbed again in July 2000. The mural painting was completely gone, and other tombs were also reportedly compromised. The perpetrator was apprehended and was confirmed as Korean. This incident led to the rumour that the stolen artifacts might be circulating inside Korea. Some media reported that several Joseonjok tomb raiders were executed for their crimes. Whether these incidents were all the result of misguided patriotism or a simple “act of interest” of certain dealers, we cannot be sure, but such incidents involving Koreans are not hard to find these days. There was an incident in which a man, who was trying to steal Balhae artifacts from a cultural relics’ management office in Ningan, Heilongjiang Province, killed a guard. After he was apprehended, the thief confessed that he committed the crime at the urging of a Korean. There are also reports of a Korean student studying overseas bribing the workers at excavation sites and smuggling artifacts out. All these events are enough to annoy and provoke China. And those provocations indeed helped lead to recent Chinese actions, which were in essence their own counter responses to those actions from Koreans.

Is This Conflict Going to Be a Reincarnation of the Silla-Tang War?

There was an interesting newspaper report, regarding a history conference, published in August last year. The theme of the conference was somewhat sensational as it said, “De-construct Korean History!” It was an event mainly criticising historical studies based upon nationalism or nationalist sentiments or philosophies of that breed, and suggested that current Korean historical studies are overly based upon nationalism, and therefore still remain quite resistant to open studies in an era where joint studies among Korea, China, and Japan are sorely required. Some suggestions were legitimate, and agreeable. But some

suggestions were too idealistic, and therefore not agreeable. Lim Jie-Hyun said that, "If we properly de-construct Korean history and perceive it that way, we could respond more efficiently and also originally to Japan's extortive attempts in history textbook publications and China's claim upon Goguryeo history." But considering the nature of Chinese policy, I think this kind of approach is overly naive. Without substantive agreement and cooperation from the Chinese side, the de-construction of Korean history and a further de-construction of Korean nationality could lead to unexpected, probably disastrous results. The "big guy" has not changed a bit, yet he thinks wrongly that if the "little guy" changed his mind, everything would be fine.

Lee Jong-Wook also authored a book titled *The Clashes between Histories*, and claimed that Balhae was indeed part of the history of the Malgal tribe, and when we do not have present sovereignty over this area, claiming its history as our own is merely another attempt of so-called "historical invasion." His claims are so preposterous that this author is at awe. His historical perspectives are too much inclined toward the so-called "Silla-based" historical perspectives.

It is our unlucky fate to be stuck to the side of a powerful entity like China. It continuously affects us. All the countries that rose in the nearby areas of China, or those nationalities that even ruled part of Chinese territory for some time are all gone, except Korea. The Korean potential could be elaborated by the fact that it simply survived the "Chinese effect."

But China is still sticking to age-old Sino-centrism, even after the nation is under certain modernization processes. It's like a huge melting furnace, melding and assimilating everything around it, or anything in its path. The Korean president stated in his inauguration remarks that we had been forced to live a subordinate life in the past, but now we are faced with an opportunity to rise to the state of being a "central nation" of the Northeastern Asian society of the 21st century. But later, he had to drop the line of "central nation" under protest from the Chinese. And as mentioned above, other areas of government actions are also being affected.

Last year, the University of California, Berkeley opened an exhibition of East-Asian books and books regarding the history of Balhae were stationed at the Korean booth, but some Chinese fiercely protested and had the corner removed from the Korean section. They are making a buzz over these matters, even outside Asia. Why other countries should not comment or deal with areas that are supposedly Chinese in nature is beyond this author. There are many areas in China that are still off-limits to Korean or other visitors. This author also

had an unpleasant episode while trying to enter a village leading to the Goguryeo Anshi-seong fortress vestige in August, two years ago, on a trip to research Goguryeo vestiges in China. Someone who seemed like a resident guard ran out at our appearance, stopped us, and called police agents who detained us for a couple of hours. At least we were released early because it was confirmed that we did not enter the actual vestige. The place, where Goguryeo people repelled the Taejong (Taizong) emperor of the Tang dynasty, might remind them of some painful events of their own history, which might have been the reason for their over-protectiveness.

But our reaction to all this is still overly naive. Establishing diplomatic relations does not automatically mean that we should be happy. I stayed at the Yenching Institute at Harvard university for a year from the fall of 1997. I still remember a remark from a certain diplomat; he was reminded and became aware of the “Coming of the Chinese” only after he was told several times from his friends that while the rise of the Chinese is making Americans considerably nervous, Koreans do not seem to be alarmed at all. On November 1st this year, Jiang Zemin, the president of China, visited Harvard University and delivered a speech. At that very time, U.S. TV was broadcasting advertisements for movies like “Red Corner,” which dealt with the human rights issues inside China, or “Seven Years in Tibet,” or “Kundun,” which portrayed the life of the Dalai Lama; they produced a lot of critical works. It was a stark contrast from the Korean response.

China is here. While we are embroiled in our own set of problems and also busy talking with North Korea, as far as the future of the Manchurian area and the peninsula’s unification is concerned, China has established the Northeast Asia Project and is currently thinking ahead. On the other hand, we are only considering matters directly involving only South and North Korea. We do not have plans or strategies for the Chinese advance. There are very few scholars who are professionally engaged in historical studies of Gojoseon, Goguryeo, and Balhae. Government funding will do little good as long as there are no researchers to receive it. This is a very unsettling time. The Tang dynasty claimed the territory of Goguryeo and Baekje, so Silla had to fight back. We now may very well have to fight the Chinese advance which is attempting to “grant” only the history of Silla as bona fide Korean history. The Chinese government is directly involved in all of this. This is no longer a purely academic issue. It has become a political issue, a diplomatic issue, and an issue concerning the Korean people’s very own identity. We have to be ready for that.

Much time should be spent in training researchers. The government also should look far ahead. We should not depend upon broadcasts or news reports or personal leaks in acquiring and obtaining vital information. Domestic institutes that collect and store Chinese publications should be established. Personal investments from scholars have limits. Systematical support for data collection and research is advisable.

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