

The Focal Issues in the Historical Study of the Koryŏ's Resistance against Mongol

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Introduction

The war between Koryŏ and Mongol lasted over forty years from 1231 to 1273. The Mongol Empire was a worldwide empire gaining the mastery of Eurasia as well as the Continent of China. Upon its destruction of Jin Dynasty in 1234 which ruled the northern China, the empire intensified its attack on Koryŏ as an effort to put its pressure upon the southern Song. However, Koryŏ never alleviated the level of its resistance to Mongol. Mongol, on the other hand, lightened its original aim to gain Koryŏ's subjection to them under certain conditions as the war turned out to be a longer one. Its intention was to recognize Koryŏ's independence and keep Koryŏ under its control at the same time. The Mongol Empire demanded Koryŏ only two definite conditions: one was for the King of Koryŏ to bow before the Khan and the other was for Koryŏ to move back its capital from Kanghwa Island, a refuge capital back to Kaegyung, its original capital. The latter was a practical demand for the Mongol Empire to exercise its sovereignty over Koryŏ whereas the former was merely symbolic.

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Towards such demands from Mongol, Koryŏ did not follow Mongol's requests while keeping its ambiguous position. Koryŏ Dynasty was forced to submit to Mongol's demands in 1258 due to Mongol's fierce invasion, nearly thirty years upon the beginning of war. Nevertheless, Mongol made many concessions to Koryŏ from its initial demands, examining Koryŏ's submission to Mongol in 1258 minutely. First of all, Mongol lowered the King's bow before the Khan to the Crown Prince's. Moreover, returning to the capital was not even termed indefinitely. Under such agreement between two parties, the Crown Prince of Koryŏ visited the Khan in 1259, a year upon the submission whereas the King returned to the original capital, Kaegyung, in 1270, much later than the Prince's visit. Even then, Koryŏ ended up not carrying out the former event owing to the death of the Khan.

The collapse of military government, who led resistance to Mongol, made it possible for the King to return to Kaegyung in 1270. The resistant warrior group kept moving its base to continue fighting against Mongol, but faced a tragic end in Cheju Island before the allied forces of Koryŏ and Yuan.¹ Such abovementioned war over forty years was one of the most special events among all the wars fought by the Mongol Empire. At the same time, there is no fixed evaluation on the war depending on the different views of history. Thus, there are still conflicting assessments on this war. From this perspective, the aim of this paper is to summarize and discuss focal issues in the war that are or may be still controversial.

What Made It Possible for Koryŏ its Long Time Resistance to Mongol?

“Koryŏ is far way from the Mongol Empire. Tai Zong of Tang Dynasty in the ancient days could not conquer the land, yet it is divine intention for its Crown Prince to come here.²” When the Crown Prince (Wonjong in future) met Kuiblai right before his enthronement in 1259, thirty years after the war broke out. Kubilai greeted the Prince of Koryŏ with great

joy. The brief appraisal of Koryŏ's thirty-year resistance effort is comprised in the above quotation. At that time, Cho Yangpil, an official of the Mongol Empire reported to Kubilai as follows: "Even though Koryŏ is a small country, we could not conclude its submission even twenty years after sending our troops for its blocked mountains and seas." He presented a strategy to receive Koryŏ's submission by offering their hospitality to the Prince and appointing him to be the King of Koryŏ before his return to the country.³

Since its invasion to Koryŏ in 1231, it is true that the Mongol Empire made tireless efforts to bring out its submission to gain its complete mastery of the eastern Asia. Since Jin Dynasty of the northern China was conquered by Mongol in 1234, its ultimate target moved down to the southern Song. Securing its sovereignty over Koryŏ was a very important tactic for Mongol to carry out more effective strategies against the southern Song. Moreover, it was an essential proposition to penetrate into Japan to complete its complete mastery of the Eastern Asia. Even though Koryŏ was a small country in terms of land, its resistance based on blocked islands in the seas and mountain fortress walls avoided Mongolia's attack and evaded the demands from the Mongol Empire by pursuing diplomatic measures.

What made it possible for Koryŏ its long time resistance to Mongol over forty years from 1231 to 1273? Sangki Kim referred to such effort as 'the spirit based on warrior tradition against foreign power' and took notice of "non-surrender spirit among warriors of Koryŏ" as an important basis of the resistant warrior group against the Mongol Empire.⁴ In other words, the warriors of Koryŏ had traditionally passed down their independent spirit against foreign power and such spiritual basis led hard-line policies on the foreign power and helped them continue their long-term resistant effort.⁵ Byungdo Lee pointed out their effort more specifically as follows: ⁶

First, burdensome tribute and unreasonable demands from the Mongol government;

Second, strong fighting spirit of warriors based on powerful warrior regime;

Third, the natural landscape of Koryŏ helped farmers coming in and out of mountain fortress walls and islands to engage in agricultural activities; especially, Kanghwa Island, the refuge capital, was close to land, but serving as a natural stronghold with marine transportation to get to islands near and far away.

Moving the capital to Kanghwa Island and blocking the Mongol troops via islands in the sea and mountain fortress walls had served as a consistent strategy against Mongol in the military government since the rule of Choi Family. Thus, the above three factors may be summarized as 'intense fighting spirit of military government.'⁷ However, some critics indicated the limits of Choi's or military government's 'independent spirit against foreign power' or 'intense fighting spirit' as the source of Koryŏ's long-term resistance to Mongol.⁸ Furthermore, they even presented farmers' and lowly people's resistant effort as the basis of the long-term resistance. Some critiques criticized on Choi's military regime, who led the resistance effort to Mongol, especially focused on moving the capital to Kanghwa Island. They claimed that the act of moving the capital in 1232 did not serve as a resistant tactic, but helped Choi keep the military power. In other words, Choi and the military government enforced an impractical 'escape' to cling to their 'personal interest' to 'secure their military regime.'⁹

It is a general understanding that international crisis due to the Mongol invasion left Choi Family no other options except moving the capital to Kanghwa Island.¹⁰ However, some critics claim that there were other interior motives for moving the capital as well such antigovernment oppositions as bandits and rebels. Moving the capital secured the safety of military regime not only from the Mongol invasion, but also from the domestic antigovernment oppositions.¹¹

While the criticism on Choi's moving the capital is predominant among other views, there have been many efforts to pay attention to and put great

emphasis on farmers' and lowly people's resistant effort in Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol. Namely, the core of the resistance was 'the common people' including farmers and lowly people instead of the military regime.¹² I share the same view in which it is more accurate to focus and emphasize on the role of farmers and lowly people in the war between Koryŏ and Mongol. In this perspective, I have found many cases of 'local people' mainly consisted of farmers and lowly people who actively fought against the Mongol invasion and significant meanings from them.¹³ However, such argument leading to 'exclusive sense of sovereignty' of certain classes is also a dangerous direction. Moreover, some civil ministers and military officials fought against the invasion from enemies in various ways under limited circumstances, losing their lives.¹⁴

We should not overlook at the decision of resistant strategy by the military regime, supported by Koryŏ's traditional basis of international policies. At its initial phase of establishment, Koryŏ was able to carry out independent diplomatic activities under the circumstance of disunion of the China Continent. It made diplomatic decisions upon the establishment of Liao and Jin Dynasties based in Manchuria, and of Song, the Han nations. Koryŏ kept making independent diplomatic decisions over two centuries; sometimes it was inevitable for Koryŏ to fully fight against, or to submit to the stronger dynasty in China. It also established an even imperial system with China using its own chronological order. Sometimes Koryŏ took the chronological orders of Liao or Jin, but it still carried its self-pride as an 'imperial nation.'¹⁵ Under such premise Koryŏ was constituted with the basis of resistance and compromise to the military pressure of the Mongol Empire at the same time. Such background enabled both sides of support and objection to Koryŏ's policies on Mongol stirred by moving its capital to Kanghwa Island where the military regime took the former position in this crisis.

The leadership under Choi's regime during the war was extremely forceful and dogmatic so that moving the capital was possible. Some may argue that Koryŏ Dynasty could resist for a long time even without

moving its capital,¹⁶ I cannot agree to that with calm judgments. Thus, it is not easy to deny that moving the capital served as the strategic basis of its long time resistance even with its negative aspects. Fundamentally no one can criticize the political direction of military regime that denied to submit to the Mongol invasion and kept its resistant attitude. However, it is also true that they promoted the security of their own regime besides such forceful foreign policy. Their attachment to the safety of regime, on the other hand, failed to unify the resistant force with civil ministers and farmers.¹⁷ For this reason, Choi's military regime was responsible for the merits and demerits of the long time resistance to the Mongol Empire.

Why Didn't Mongol Troops Bother Attacking Kanghwa Island?

The focal strategy of Koryŏ of the Mongol invasion was its counter plan to come in and out of islands and mountain fortresses. Moving the capital to Kanghwa Island in 1232 fell under a big plot of such strategy. Choi determined to move the capital on June 16, 1232 and began to move. The King of Koryŏ, arrived in Kanghwa Island on July 7.¹⁸ Moving back to the original capital from Kanghwa Island to Kaegyung happened in May 1270.

Upon the unexpected move of Koryŏ Dynasty, the Mongol troops examined to attack Kanghwa Island directly and attacked on the opposite shore of Kanghwa Island deliberately against Koryŏ's strategy using the natural landscape. Despite of such effort, it is true that they could not directly attack Kanghwa Island. Consequently, the island served as a great obstacle to attack Koryŏ.

The foremost feature of such matter raised the issue of strategic location of Kanghwa Island and the Mongol troops' limit of their sea battle ability. The strategic advantage of Kanghwa Island had a reverse effect on the Mongol invasion of the island. Byungdo Lee mentioned the natural advantage of Kanghwa Island against the foreign power earlier,

summarized as follows:¹⁹

- ① An island utilizing the weakness of Mongol troop in sea battles;
- ② Its proximity the land with the great difference between the rise and the fall of the tide;
- ③ Its proximity to Kaegyung;
- ④ Its linkage and marine transportation to other regions.

In connection with moving the capital to Kanghai Island, it is a widely spread common sense to use the weakness of Mongol troop's sea battle ability. However, the assessment on their sea battle ability has been controversial for some time. The reason for them not attacking Kanghai Island was not due to their inability to fight in the sea. Such disputes are stated as follows: "Were Mongols really inferior in sea battles? If they were too weak in the sea to attack Kanghai Island, how could they conquer extensive amount of land?" Even if the Mongols were weak in the sea, the allied Mongol force of Kitan, Jurchen and Han should not have been inferior in the sea battles.²⁰ In this perspective, it is not true that the Mongol troops were weak in the sea battles. Moreover, the fact that they did not attack Kanghai Island was because the battle line of Koryŏ was not the main target of Mongol Empire fundamentally. Thus, it has been expressed that the main reason on this matter was due to Mongol's passive strategy on Koryŏ.²¹

Some, however, have also expressed that that the Mongol did not attack Kanghai Island was not appropriate either along with the issue of their inability to attack. It is problematic to see their inability to attack in the sea battle, but their passive attitude towards the attack would underestimate Koryŏ's military capacity.²² In the case of Kanghai Island, such view of the two different cases may be appropriate. However, this matter must be kept in order from more common sense basis.

First of all, there is a problem with denying the inability of Mongol troop in sea battles. Their main strategy was based on cavalry that fundamentally laying the most emphasis on speed. Even with mobilization

of the Kitan and Jurchen, its strategic basis did not change. Sea battles required completely different tactics from those of the cavalry of which difference may be about the same as the analogical difference between the army and navy. Those Mongol troops invading Koryŏ were not the naval forces, but the cavalry so that it was true for them to feel the pressure on sea battles and require separate preparations. Therefore, the fundamental strategy of Mongol troops was to conquer and devastate the inland rather than to carry out with direct attack on Kanghwa Island to receive submission from Koryŏ Dynasty. In this sense, they did not attack Kanghwa Island due to their inability to fight in the sea. However, it was difficult for them to attack geographically,²³ Koryŏ possessed trained naval forces along with appropriate defensive power, and the island itself was three layers of defense lines. Thus, it was not simple for the Mongol troops to attack the island. Then, it is fair to state that they could not attack Kanghwa Island. Eventually, they could not attack the island and did not attack at the same time.²⁴

Among the previous discussion points, it is hard to understand to declare the Mongol Empire was passive in attacking Koryŏ even with its naval power because Koryŏ was not one of their main targets. It is natural to apply economical aspects in the execution of wars so that it is common sense to arrange the attacking force according to the opposite force or the ability to fight. The Mongol Empire sent enough number of troops to conquer Koryŏ in their invasion. Moreover, the Mongol troops in Koryŏ did their best to receive submission. As the time passed by, the degree of war became intensified and people of Koryŏ suffered more as a result. Koryŏ was not a far place geographically from the core of the Mongol Empire. In addition, gaining the mastery of Koryŏ and mobilizing soldiers from there were strategically necessary to carry out with the wars against Jin or Song Dynasties. Conquering Koryŏ was imperative for them to expand their attack on Japan. In these comprehensive views, it is only superficial understanding to claim that the Mongol's strategic importance of Koryŏ was 'secondary' so that their attack on Koryŏ was passive.

Did Koryŏ's Resistance to Mongol Escalate Step by Step?

The most noticeable fact about Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol in the understanding of contemporary history is surely the participation of the non-ruling classes such as farmers and lowly people, or of local people. Both historians from South and North Korea observed such fact from various dimensions; especially, it is great contribution of North Korean history to pay attention to this aspect of Koryŏ's resistance in terms of 'the people's resistance' earlier in my opinion. Jaehong Kim's book epitomizes such fact systematically.²⁵ The main frame of understanding Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol reveals the process of resistance in three stages systematically: resistance to Mongol in cooperation with the ruling class, the people's resistance to foreign power and their resistance effort against the Mongol invaders and the Royal family of Koryŏ in collusion with them. These three phases can be summarized simply as follows:²⁶

Phase	Period	Contents	Characteristics
Phase 1	1231-1232	From the beginning of Mongol invasion to the moving the capital to Kanghwa Island	People's resistance to Mongol in cooperation with the ruling class
Phase 2	1232-1270	Resistance period via moving the capital to Kanghwa Island	People's resistance to foreign power
Phase 3	1270-1273	Sambyulcho's resistance effort against Mongol	People's resistance effort against the Mongol invaders and the Royal family of Koryŏ in collusion with them

The Developmental Phases of Resistance to Mongol, Jaehong Kim

Such developmental theory of history of Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol reflecting a standpoint of people's resistance was first presented by Seok-Hyung Kim upon founding North Korea and later solidified by Jaehong Kim, then become the framework of North Korean historical view on the matter. It is worth highly recognizing people's resistance

effort against Mongol. It is considerably appropriate to understand the contents of theory as the people's oriented resistance among farmers and lowly people. In South Korean history, separated from North Korean history, scholars in the latter days pay special attention to and emphasize on the active participation of non-ruling class including farmers and lowly people whose view must be based on the appropriate nature of the North Korean theory on Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol.

On the other hand, there is a problem in understanding this view as well in which those scholars understand Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol as the 'resistance effort by people' only. Fundamentally, Koryŏ government held fast to both sides of war and peace against Mongol in its resistant effort so that it groped for diplomatic resolutions rather than face-to-face confrontations in cold reality. Due to this policy, Koryŏ restrained itself from committing its central army to the war so that it was inevitable for each region to fight against the Mongol troop on its own. The Koryŏ government encouraged provincial people to move to islands and mountain fortresses to protect them. During the course of this effort, there were many cases in which government and local officials worked together in defensive effort.²⁷ In other words, it is problematic for 'people's resistance' to exclude participation from diverse classes including district, military and local officials.

One of the most important current of the times in the Koryŏ's resistant history to Mongol was that the position of resistant group weakened as the time went by. Initiative participation of lowly people and bandits in the war in the first invading period of Mongol in 1231 was extremely remarkable that was the very phase in 'cooperation with the ruling class' as mentioned before. The problem is that the level of resistance in this period is evaluated as the lowest according to the developmental theory of resistance to Mongol. However, this phase was the time with the most widespread support and basis of resistance carried out by the military regime. This cooperative effort was destroyed by moving the capital to Kanghai Island in 1232 that transformed to one-sided resistant effort led by the military regime.²⁸ Sambyulcho's resistance finalizing the resistant

effort to Mongol was an extremely deteriorating case exhibiting the worst position of pro-war advocates. The Koryŏ government along with the King publicly announced to submit to the Mongol Empire whereas the pro-war advocates fell down to a state of minority. Considering such transition of resistance effort, it is very difficult to understand Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol in terms of developmental phases objectively. Nevertheless, no one can deny that this developmental theory sufficiently brings us sympathy with the emphasis on the people's contribution and the role in the resistance effort as mentioned above.

Sambyulcho: Were They a Spark to Resistance to Mongol or Antigovernment Political Soldiers?

It was Sangki Kim's contribution to raise the meaning of Sambyulcho from a simple rebellion against the dynasty to a case of independent resistant act to foreign power.²⁹ Since then, its meaning began to be emphasized as one of the most important events or highlights in Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol.³⁰ For example, its historical appraisal in North Korean history is a direct case. On the other hand, Sambyulcho's resistance to Mongol was epitomized as a representative case of 'overcoming a national crisis' in terms of political reality in South Korea rooted on the military government in the 1970s. With little differences in views, it was common to occupy a certain degree of historical meanings in Korean history since the liberation in terms of nationalism.

Criticism on the Koryŏ military regime's resistance to Mongol already began in the 1970s that did not deny the essence of Sambyulcho's resistance itself. Some historians since 1990 began to reexamine Sambyulcho's resistant history to Mongol in different avenues.³¹ and present unfavorable opinions on the emphasis of resistant history to foreign power. Emphasizing resistant acts to foreign power in history may "put oneself in danger of falling into a trap of heteronomy against one's better judgment by establishing it as the central axis of the society back

then.”³² At the same time, they raised strong doubts about this perspective of the emphasis on resistance to foreign power promoted by political intention of certain regime. Thus, they suggested to find the historical meaning of Sambyulcho's resistance to Mongol from ‘opposition of the popular will’ rather than ‘people's resistance’ along with their criticism on nationalistic view in Korean history.³³ Such argument, on the other hand, trying to approach Sambyulcho's resistant effort from a broader view provided an eye-opening moment for existence of reconciliation between Koryŏ and Mongol.³⁴

As various opinions on Sambyulcho's resistance were presented, it is not peculiar to hear negative remarks on resistance to Mongol itself recently. As some may differentiate whether resisting effort under Choi's regime strived for national security or political ambition, they may argue that Sambyulcho's resistance must be evaluated based on their goals and motives. In this view, they figuratively compared Sambyulcho to ‘the Army Security Command’ and their resistance to ‘unfavorable event in national economy.’³⁵ Here they showed their critical views where they defined Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol as ‘thirty-year resistance’ and referred to Onwang of Sambyulcho as a ‘fake king, feudal lord’ as mentioned in *Koryŏsa*. If one defined Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol as ‘thirty-year resistance,’ they would not recognize Sambyulcho's resistant effort as a part of Koryŏ's resistant history to Mongol.

Criticism on Sambyulcho's resistance was mainly based on the negative view about the nationalistic historical view, the basis of Korean history.³⁶ In fact, the problem with continuing Korean history based on the nationalism even now in the twenty-first century, sixty years upon the colonial period and inspiring national spirit via history may bring about an extreme effect of nationalism education. However, it is unavoidable to express a negative position towards post-nationalism from Korean history even with problems of nationalistic history education. Any historical views may possess their periodical relativity so that the nationalistic historical view certainly cannot be the definite premise of history education of a nation. Nevertheless, racial issues in history are undeniably

present even in the twenty-first century and that cannot be excluded from history itself. No one can deny 'the identity of Korea' as a Korean people's nation. The issue of unification, the most important matter in hand in the twenty-first Korean history requires the proposition of 'people.' Without such proposition, the justification of unification would be lost. Thus, developmental progress of a people's nation still remains as an urgent problem in this era that leads a conclusion that we cannot exclude nationalistic historical view in Korean history. For this reason, 'open nationalism,' the ideal of history education, which discourages exclusion and encourages coexistence, is still valid even now.

It is hard to deny that the military regime's resistance to Mongol had its own limits due to its nature. Accordingly, Sambyulcho also had its own limit as well. These limits hindered Koryŏ's long time resistance to Mongol from fully achieving the desired end. However, ridiculing the resistant history with these aspects of limits is deprived of one's sincerity towards history that may be considered as excessive subjectivity.

Glorifying Sambyulcho's resistance to Mongol, *ex parte*, is a problem because it is closer to 'myth making' than fact. However, it is also troublesome to demerit the historical significance of event intentionally or emotionally. At least, it is necessary to recognize the historical fact and meaning of Sambyulcho's resistance to Mongol.³⁷

The archaeology of the Koryŏ's War against Mongol

I have recently stressed on the cultural aspect of the war against Mongol.³⁸ Especially I have often emphasized the need to study on the battle field and remains of the war along with the strategy of war, formation of troop, and weapons. Comparing to the historical discussions on Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol, the archeological aspect of this issue has been stagnant. Koryŏ's war against Mongol for half a century ended in its submission to the Mongol Empire so that ordering and preserving the related data became extremely difficult as a result. The reason for the

record of Koryŏ's resistant history being simple was heavily due to such historical situation. Lack of written records may be complemented by the archeological data from the war site in conjunction with history. Such archeological data include the remains of Kanghwa Island, the capital during the war against Mongol, those mountain fortresses from Koryŏ Dynasty where fierce wars took place, and Sambyulcho's bases such as Chin Island and Cheju Island. The field data from these regions may serve as vivid sources of data to supplement the real condition of Koryŏ's war against Mongol.³⁹

First of all, those remains from Kanghwa Island, the base of the forty-year resistant period to Mongol, hold great importance. The remains from Kanghwa Island era of Kanghwa Island have finally been examined from its surface for the last few years that is the most fundamental observation to be made. The surface examination includes the one covering Kanghwa Island as a whole⁴⁰ and the archeological excavation on certain remains.⁴¹ In addition, excavation of the main remains, such as temples and royal tombs, are partially carried out⁴², and there has been some limited effort to make historical and archeological discussions about the Kanghwa Island era lately.⁴³

I will present an example for the importance of examining Kanghwa Island in terms of archeological aspect. The royal residence in Kanghwa Island has been designated as the historical landmark number 133. This place used to serve as a temporary palace of Chosun Dynasty, but there was not any clear evidence for it to be the palace site for Koryŏ Dynasty. Thus, some scholars raised doubts about it being the palace site for Koryŏ for lack of records and its limited space in the past. In the late Chosun Dynasty, the outer Kyujanggak was built there so that this place (Chosun's palace site) was excavated four times from 1995 to 2001. Hardly any remains of Koryŏ Dynasty were discovered from this site, once considered as a part of palace site for Koryŏ. The examiner made a report to such result as follows:

This site is known to hold a palace from Koryŏ Dynasty before the

one from Chosun Dynasty. However, buildings of this site were built upon establishing the foundation of which residual soil was dug to flatten the area so that previous buildings were completely removed and only necessary remaining parts from those buildings were utilized to build new ones. Thus, no remains from Koryŏ Dynasty were to be found anywhere from this site. Only small amount of broken pieces of celadon porcelain was found which produced contrary evidence to be the remain of palace from Koryŏ Dynasty.⁴⁴

The examiner's report on the palace site for Koryŏ Dynasty remarkably catches our attention. He could not discover any evidence to prove it to be a Koryŏ palace from a site, so-called 'Koryŏ Palace.' 'Only small amount of broken pieces of celadon porcelain' was discovered from here, but such pieces can be found anywhere in Kanghwa Island. Thus, it cannot serve as hard evidence to prove the site to be a palace site for Koryŏ. In fact, the result from the above excavation may imply that this site was not a palace site for Koryŏ from the beginning. According to their result, the outer Kyujanggak of the late Chosun Dynasty was built on top of 'historical remains of Koryŏ palace.'

The above excavation result from the palace site for Koryŏ in the thirteenth century Kanghwa Island presented necessity to examine the remains of Koryŏ in more primitive ways. Besides the palace site, it is imperative to carry out with fundamental studies on construction of interior, middle and exterior castles, and various facilities of the capital back then in the Kanghwa Island era of Kanghwa Island. Apathy and lack of recognition on 'Kanghwa Island from the thirteenth century' as the capital still leaves such valuable remains to be damaged.⁴⁵

As Koryŏ's resistant effort to Mongol emerged throughout the nation, battle fields or historically related regions to the war are still widely spread out. Especially it is necessary to remember the fact that many mountain fortresses used to be once fierce battle fields or shelters. Paying attention to such sites led to sporadic excavation from fortress examination, a general category of archeology. Mountain fortresses,

however, have repeatedly been repaired and rebuilt in their nature so that it is required to throw in different types of interests to discover historical facts from the thirteenth century. In many cases, built-up remains are recycled with the flow of time. Fortresses and building sites tend to be diachronic in general that leave remains of a long period of time. Such historic scenes must have been destroyed several times all this while accompanying hardship to figure out their nature and chronology. In other words, it is only possible to grasp the data from the thirteenth century upon a series of careful analysis and examination on the fortress.⁴⁶ Comparing to this, the timeline for historical scenes of Sambyulcho such as Chin Island and Cheju Island can be narrowed down to the thirteenth century that carries more significance in terms of data.

The historical scenes related with Sambyulcho are extremely important for they not only contain historical significance in Sambyulcho themselves, but also include definite data relating them such as fortresses and sites. Such data are not only important as historical one regarding Sambyulcho, but also archeologically and art historically significant to be close to the absolute chronological time of fortresses, buildings, pottery and weapons. Considering the time period when it was established and used was generally limited around the thirteenth century, the historical scenes of Sambyulcho have relatively been well preserved.

In comparison with their significance, those historical scenes were neither well preserved nor investigated. Such apathy was fundamentally caused by lack of understanding their importance or of interest. Problems with preservation of the scenes and insufficient number of the related data imply that scholars in these days and administration are greatly responsible for such flaw. Scholastically the root of the problem may lead to their insufficient effort to link Sambyulcho and those scenes as an important part of history. It has been the true circumstance for historians to care to research documents only and for archeologists to fail to pay their interest to carry out with archeological findings from Koryŏ Dynasty. The main interest of archeologists has been focused on prehistory or ancient history.

Upon the surface examination of Yongjang Fortress in Chin Island in 1984,⁴⁷ the museum of Mokpo University excavated the site in 1989 and 2004. However, the report of surface examination was very rough whereas the excavation was carried out in extremely limited scope.⁴⁸ While neglecting academically precise investigation, it is hard to deny that it is general tendency for government or local governing body to focus on repairing and restoring cultural remains only. As a result, full size repairing projects of cultural remains heavily funded by government have ended up immensely destroying historical scenes.

Those who operated a full size restoration project of Hangpaduri Fortress in the North Cheju District in 1970s finally presented a brief report at the level of surface examination in 1998⁴⁹ and published ??Scientific Research and Comprehensive Fundamental Restoration Plan of Hangpaduri Historical Scene in Cheju??. a type of surface examination report in 2002. This report somewhat enabled to summarize basic data of Hangpaduri Fortress, but more thorough research must be done in the future that is even more important. From the present status of the above excavation effort on historical sites, investigation on the historical scenes of Sambyulcho has finally begun to lay groundwork in recent years.

In historical and cultural survey of coastal islands, it is imperative to remember the Koryŏ's resistant history to Mongol in the thirteenth century. The most emerging period of its importance of marine and islands in Korea was the thirteenth century because Koryŏ's strategy to enter islands against the Mongol invasion served its setting.⁵⁰ The significance of coastal routes became even more important as economic and military routes that emerged as living space through land reclamation by drainage and development at the same time. The issue of land reclamation in Kanghwa Island,⁵¹ tombs from Koryŏ Dynasty in coastal islands,⁵² and ships from Koryŏ in the coastal routes have been recently discovered.⁵³ Furthermore, findings of such data will increase even more in near future. For they may be originated from Koryŏ's resistant history to Mongol in the thirteenth century, it is essential to pay attention to utilize the historical events in the resistant history of the thirteenth century

as a background and basis for historical interpretation.⁵⁴

Conclusion

A series of wars stormed by the Mongol Empire took place in East Asia in the thirteenth century. It was unavoidable for Koryŏ, located nearby the continent, to experience all kinds of tribulations under such circumstances. It had already submitted to Jurchens of Jin Dynasty earlier politically whereas autocracy of military regime was well established domestically. Therefore, it was possible for Koryŏ to react to the pressure from the Mongol Empire in various dimensions. The military regime of Koryŏ led direct resistant effort to Mongol which developed into a long-term war from 1231 to 1273. This paper presented different discussions relating to questions on the war between Koryŏ and Mongol while adding my own opinion to summarize the war. These questions include: 1. what made it possible for Koryŏ its long time resistance to Mongol?; 2. why didn't the Mongol troop bother attacking Kanghai Island?; 3. did Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol escalate step by step?; and 4. Sambyulcho: were they a spark to resistance to Mongol or antigovernment political soldiers? In addition to those questions, I have mentioned the importance of understanding the thirteenth century through data from historical scenes such as historical sites and remains in the section entitled "Koryŏ? The 'Cultural History' of the war against Mongol."

There have been extreme differences in opinions on the merits of demerits of the military regime's resistant effort to Mongol so far. On the other hand, the role of Koryŏ's common people including farmers and lowly people has been accompanied as well that has been highly recognized. To this appraisal, I have agreed to evaluate the role of Koryŏ's common people highly, but disagreed with this exclusive role play of the merits of 'common people only' at the same time. I have also expressed criticism on the developmental theory of history of Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol of North Korean history in which Koryŏ's resistant

effort to Mongol incrementally developed along with the progress of war. The reason for such disagreement is that the position of military regime leading the war against Mongol became narrowed down along with the progress of war and Sambyulcho's resistant effort to Mongol was carried out where the pro-war advocates broke away from the core of power.

The military regime's resistant effort to Mongol had its extreme limits for Koryŏ's resistant effort was determined by political position of Koryŏ government. That was closely related with the political limitation of military regime. In this aspect, it is reasonable for the military regimes's strategy to resist to Mongol receiving criticism nowadays, but it is not fair to evaluate them and the meaning of their resistance itself negatively due to their political limit. I considered that the Mongol troops had chosen to attack the main land of Koryŏ to isolate the Royal Family in Kanghwa Island and to drag them out of the island instead of a direct attack due to geographical conditions of the island, weakness of the Mongol troops in sea battles and defensive strategy of Koryŏ government in the island.

The last problem to mention is if Koryŏ's long time resistance to Mongol served the country any good in reality. In other words, a long-term war might have resulted in maximizing the hardship of common people. It is dangerous to apply a simple theory where resistance was good and compromise was bad. However, it is not easy to conclude how much Koryŏ's burden would have been minimized if the government decided to negotiate with and submit to Mongol in the early phase of war. Essentially plundering mastery policy of the Mongol Empire required many economic and human sacrifices. Even though the Mongol's policy on Koryŏ was significantly alleviated since the era of Kubilai from the previous days, Koryŏ was burdened by supplying a number of material and human sacrifices as a price to submit itself to Mongol in the Mongol's war against Japan. Even from then on, Mongol kept imposing various types of political and economic tribute. Considering these facts, early closure of the war under the premise of submission would not lead to the prosperity of Koryŏ and security of the common people. Therefore, evaluation on Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol should focus more on the

background of choosing political policy than good and evil, or black and white judgment on the result of the policy. In other words, it is more important to understand why the government made such choices objectively rather than to evaluate judgmentally.

Keywords: Koryŏ's Resistance to Mongol, Kanghai Island, Choi's military Regime, Sambyulcho

Notes :

- 1 I have previously published *A Study on Koryŏ's Resistant History to Mongol* (1991, Ilji) summarizing the progress of thirty-year war between Koryŏ and Mongol and *Koryŏ Sambyulcho's Resistant Effort to Mongol* (Seoul: Ilji, 2000) describing Sambyulcho's resistance to Mongol from 1270 to 1273.
- 2 *Koryŏsa*, 25. The Year of Swine, The first March of Won Jong 's reign.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Sangki Kim, "About Sambyulcho and their War," *A Study on Cultural Exchange History of Eastern Asia*. (Seoul: Eulyoo Moonhwa, 1948): 135-9.
- 5 Sangki Kim claims the military regime's resistant effort to Mongol intended to abuse their power on their own on one hand so that its political nature was closely related to this fact. However, what he emphasizes from here was the traditional 'military spirit' of Koryŏ.
- 6 Byungdo Lee, *Korean History (The Middle Ages)* (Seoul: Eulyoo Moonhwa, 1961): 599-600.
- 7 Strong 'autonomy to foreign nations' referring to as a 'characteristic of the military regime' and 'fighting spirit of military' pointing as a factor for a long time resistance are parallel to such view. Byungha Min, "Control Mechanism of Choi's Regime," *Korean History*. Vol. 3. (Seoul: National Institute of Korean History, 1973): 202-3.
- 8 Hyunkoo Min, "Koryŏ's Resistance to Mongol and the Complete Collection of Buddhist Sutra," *Complete Collection of Korean Studies*. Vol. 1. (1978).
- 9 Changhee Park, "Kyu-Bo Lee and His True Nature in Kanghai Island," *Complete Collection of Korean Studies*. Vol. 7. (1978): 287 and Yonghyuck Yoon, "The Resistant Attitude of Choi's Military Regime towards Mongol,"

Collection of History. Vol. 21? 22. (1977): 326.

- 10 Kideock Kim considers that it would be difficult for the military regime to receive criticisms from historians on their decision to move the capital to secure their power. However, it was inevitable choice for Choi's regime to move the capital under the circumstances of those days. Since moving the capital would have happened even under the royal regime, such move was recognized as natural reaction to the Mongol invasion. Kideock Kim, "Points in dispute of a Study on the History of Kanghai Island as the Capital in Koryŏ Dynasty," *History Studies*. 61, 96.
- 11 Yoonkon Kim, "Background on Moving the Capital to Kanghai Island," *Taegu History*. Vol. 15? 16. (1978): 95-6.
- 12 From Jinchul Kang's "Resistance to the Mongol Invasion" (*Korean History*. Vol. 7, 363-73), historians began to pay more attention to farmers' and lowly people's resistant effort to Mongol that has become an important characteristic of Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol as a general opinion. However, the view of 'people's resistance' focusing on the 'common people' was emphasized in research of such topic from the beginning in North Korea.
- 13 Yonghyuck Yoon's papers including "Mongol's Second Invasion and their Attack on Cheoin Fortress," *Korean History Studies*. Vol. 29 (1980), "Mongol's Invasion upon Kyungsangdo and Koryŏ's Triumph of Sangju Fortress in 1254," *Jindan Bulletin*. Vol. 68 (1989) and "The Local People's Resistance to the Mongol Invasion—in the Cases of Locals in Jincheon and Ta'in Chŭlso 'min in Choongju in 1254," *Korean History Chronicle*. Vol. 24, (1991) are some of the examples recognizing the participation of local people.
- 14 Jaebeom Lee's paper, "On the Characteristics of Koryŏ's Resistance to Mongol" (*Baeksan Bulletin*. Vol. 70, 2004) covers the period before and after moving the capital to Kanghai Island, but he partially recognizes administrative effort of 'government officials' to resist to Mongol besides the resistant effort from 'the common people.'
- 15 Kideock Kim, "Koryŏ's Monarch and Imperial System," *Korean History Chronicle*. Vol. 78 (1997): 161-72.
- 16 The opinion resisting to Mongol without moving the capital was also discussed in 1232. In Yoonkon Kim's "Background on Moving the Capital to Kanghai Island," such discussion is stated as follows: "if the government actively progresses with prompt diplomatic acts to defend against the Mongol reinvasion or reinforces more constructive defensive measures with a stronger

battle line.”

- 17 The limitation of moving the capital even with its inevitable nature is well summarized in Kideock Kim's "Points in dispute of a Study on the History of Kanghwa Island as the Capital in Koryŏ Dynasty.”
- 18 I defined the initial move of the capital to Kanghwa Island on July 7th in which Kojong moved there; however, Kideock Kim set the date on June 16th as the initial day of the move. Ibid. 61.
- 19 Byungdo Lee, 580-1. It is Lee's idea that there was no better place than Kanghwa Island as a basis to resist to Mongol while farming at the same time, which was namely 'a place to defend and farm.' On the one hand, Myungchul Yoon evaluates Kanghwa Island as a focal point of Kyungki Bay, which is a 'central node of marine transportation' in East Asia. Considering the distribution of Mongol troops and their connection to the southern Song, it was a favorable location than Kaegyung according to him. Myungchul Yoon, "Koryŏ's Capital Move to Kanghwa Island and the Marine Characteristics of its Resistance to Mongol," *Marine Activities of Koreans and East Asian and Mediterranean Sea* (Seoul: Hakyeon Moonhwa, 2002): 447-57.
- 20 Ikjoo Lee, "Mongol Invasion in the Latter Koryŏ and the Characteristics of People's Resistance," *History Criticism*. Vol. 24, (1994): 261.
- 21 Chaehyuk Joo, "Reexamination of Studies on Mongol-Koryŏ History: Disputed Views in the Studies of Mongol-Koryŏ History," *Aesan Bulletin*. Vol. 8, (1989): 16.
- 22 Kideock Kim recognizes the sea battle capability of Mongol troops, and the real reason behind why Mongol did not attack Kanghwa Island was due to Koryŏ's military power around Kang Island such as Sambyulcho. Kideock Kim, 106-8.
- 23 Youngjoon Choi emphasized on the fundamental understanding of Kanghwa Island "with its wide foreshore and extreme difference between the rise and fall of the tide there" rather than a simple fact, an island. Even on a hot summer day, the speed of tide reached six or seven knots. Moreover, the foreshore was so wet that it was hard for any outsider invaders to attack the island. Choi listed other examples utilizing such geographical attributes as much as possible with Penland region of Wash in England and Netherlands. Youngjoon Choi, "Reclamation of Swampy Shore in Kanghwa Region and Changes in Scenary," *Living History of Land and People* (Seoul: Hangil, 1997): 183-4.

- 24 Jongjin Park paid special attention to the reason for Koryō's long time resistance to Mongol from the military regime's effective influence over different regions so that the regime could collect relatively stable taxes and ensure its finance. Jongjin Park, "Koryō's Control over Regional Areas in the Era of Kanghai Island as the Capital," *Korean Middle Age History Studies*. Vol. 13 (2002). One of the reasons why it was possible for the military regime was because of safety, 'linkage and marine transportation to other regions' of Kanghai Island.
- 25 Jaehong Kim, *The Resistance of Koryō's Common people to the Invaders from Yuan Dynasty* (Seoul: Science Institute, 1963).
- 26 Yonghyuck Yoon presents the developmental phases of Koryō's resistance to Mongol according to North Korean historians in his "Study and Description of Koryō's Resistant History to Mongol in North Korean History," *Koryō Sambyulcho's Resistant Effort to Mongol* (Seoul: Ilji, 2000): 14-8.
- 27 Jaebeom Lee presents the resistant efforts of 'common people' and government officials in Koryō's resistance to Mongol as examples in parallel. Jaebeom Lee, "On the Characteristics of Koryō's Resistance to Mongol," *Baeksan Bulletin*. Vol. 70 (2004): 70, 200.
- 28 Migrating farmers (bandits) from Masan (Paju) of Kyungki region raised an issue of 'a crack troop of five thousand' and joined the government military in September 1231 immediately followed by the initial invasion of Mongol and bandits around Kwanak Mountain in Seoul was also organized into a defensive unit to fight in a war. Those were the representative examples of such joint effort. Moving the capital to Kanghai Island became a spark to break off the cooperative effort upon which antigovernment revolts of the people were stirred. Yonghyuck Yoon, "On the Revolts of the People in the Koryō's Resistant Period to Mongol," *A Study on Koryō's Resistant History to Mongol*. 1991, 362-5.
- 29 Sangki Kim, "About Sambyulcho and their War," *Jindan Bulletin*. Vol. 9, 10, 13 (1938-41) (later reprinted in *A Study on Cultural Exchange History of Eastern Asia*. (Seoul: Eulyoo Moonhwa, 1948)).
- 30 Yoonkon Kim, "Sambyulcho's Resistant Effort to Mongol and Local Common People," *East Asian Culture*. Vol. 20 ·21. (Taegu: Youngnam University East Asian Cultural Research Center, 1981).
- 31 Hyunkoo Min expresses his view on the recognition of setting Sambyulcho's way of resisting to Mongol as the only justifiable act is problematic as it was

- wrong for the general understanding of imperial era to define Sambyulcho's resistant effort as a riot. Hyunkoo Min, "Mongol Troops ·Kim Pangkyung ·Sambyulcho," *Public Lecture on Korean History*. Vol. 8 (1991): 104.
- 32 Jongki Park, "International Relations in Koryŏ Dynasty," *Korean History* (Seoul: Hangil, 1994): 224-5.
- 33 The meaning of 'Sambyulcho's resistant effort' should not be described by their 'strong national spirit,' but should be found from explosive resistance of the common people to the union of Koryŏ's ruling class and Mongol. Ikjoo Lee, 269.
- 34 Hyunkoo Min's "Mongol Troops ·Kim Pangkyung ·Sambyulcho" urges to expand this point of view. Further writings on reconciliation theory between Koryŏ and Mongol include Ansik Shin, "Inquiry on the Negotiation of Choi's Military Regime with Mongol," *Korean History Chronicle*. Vol. 45, (1993), Ikjoo Lee, "Mongol Invasion in the Latter Koryŏ and the Characteristics of People's Resistance," *History Bulletin*. Vol. 151, (1996) and Heungjong Lee, "Reinforcement of Resistance to Mongol and the Role of Civil Ministers," *Korean History Chronicle in Commemoration of Professor Kyung-Man Hong's Retirement*, 2003.
- 35 "Government-patronized scholars under the military dictatorship in the 1970s highly praised the military regime a progressive political group and chose Sambyulcho's activities as a case of 'overcoming national crisis.' It was an example of manipulating history to gain the nationalistic legitimacy of the military dictatorship." Ewha Lee, "Mongol Invasion and the Thirty-year Resistance," *Korean History Stories* (Seoul: Hangil, 1999): 104-5.
- 36 The emphasis on the nationalism was politically manipulated by both South and North Korean governments since the independence from Japan that is criticized as follows: "excessive nationalistic historical view hinders one's objective historical understanding." According to this, farmer's resistance to the Mongol invasion is regarded as "protective and fighting measures of country or rural community rather than the national resistance based on the nationalism." Zihyun Lim, "Critical Examination on the Understanding of 'Nationalism' of Korean History Group," *Nationalism Is Treason* (Seoul: Sonamu, 1999).
- 37 One of my previously published articles, "Various Views on Sambyulcho's Resistant Effort to Mongol," *Koryŏ Sambyulcho's Resistant Effort to Mongol* (Seoul: Ilji, 2000) ought to be referred as well along with this issue. In

addition, in their “The Leading Group of Sambyulcho’s Resistant Effort to Mongol and its Meaning,” (*Studies on the History of Cheju Island*, Vol. 11 (2002): 25-7), they present a view in which historical attributes to Sambyulcho’s resistant effort must be evaluated by both their public and resistant nature. Moreover, Koryō’s long time resistance including Sambyulcho’s to Mongol helped Koryō keep its independence from intervention of Yuan Dynasty.

- 38 Yonghyuck Yoon, “East Asian History and Sambyulcho’s Culture in the Thirteenth Century,” *Culture North Cheju*. Vol. 1 (Cheju: North Cheju Cultural Center, 2004): 17-42.
- 39 Yonghyuck Yoon, “Koryō-Mongol Related Historical Sites in Korea,” *Folk History Chronicle in Commemoration of Professor Hyun-Gil Kim*, 1997.
- 40 Army Museum, *National Defense Remains of Kanghwa Island*, 2000; the Jogye Order’s Cultural Heritage Excavation Research Group, *Kanghwa’s Cultural Remains-Surface Examination Report on Kanghwa’s Cultural Remains*, 2002; the Jogye Order’s Cultural Heritage Excavation Research Group, *Map of Distribution of Cultural Remains (Kanghwa District)*, 2003. *Kanghwa’s Old Map*, not a surface examination report, is a very important publication as fundamental data published in Kanghwa District in 2003.
- 41 Hyungkoo Lee, *Temporary Palace Site of Koryō and Jungjok Battle Formation Field of Chosun-Surface Examination of the precincts of Jeondeung Temple in Samrang Fortress at Jungjok Mountain in Kanghwa Island*, East Asian Archeology Research Institute, 2000; Hyungkoo Lee, *Surface Examination of Palace Site of Koryō’s Crown Princess at Mani Mountain in Kanghwa Island*, Sunmoon University Archeology Research Institute, 2001.
- 42 *Kanghwa Stone Tomb* of National Cultural Properties Research Institute, 2003 and *Excavation Report on the Historical Site of Kanghwa Sanctuary* of Dongguk University Museum are the results of such remains.
- 43 Academic seminars such as <Reexamination of Kanghwa Island as the Capital in Koryō Dynasty > in May 2000 sponsored by Incheon Catholic University’s National Cultural Institute and <Society and Culture of Kanghwa in Koryō Dynasty > in November 2004 sponsored by Incheon City Museum.
- 44 Hyuckjin Roh and et al. *Chosun’s Palace Site (Outer Gyujanggak Site) in Kanghwa*, Hallym University Museum, 2003, 164
- 45 Three articles in *Korean History Chronicle*, Vol. 106 (National Institute of

Korean History, 2005), Yonghyuck Yoon's "A Study on the Walls of Koryŏ Kanghai Island Fortress," Changhyun Kim's "Palace and Government Offices in Kanghai in Koryŏ Dynasty," and Hyungwoo Kim's "A Study on Temples in Kanghai in Koryŏ Dynasty" comprehensively advocate their interest in Kanghai Island of the thirteenth century.

- 46 Those historical sites in relation to Koryŏ's resistance to Mongol which have been researched at the level of surface examination include Ch'ŏin Fortress, Kŭmdol Fortress, Pongŭi Mountain Fortress, Taerim Mountain Fortress, Wŏrak Mountain Fortress and Han'gye Mountain Fortress.
- 47 Eunha Architectural Design Office, *Surface Examination Report on Yongjang Fortress in Jin Island*, Jindo District, 1985.
- 48 Seongrak Choi, *Chindo Yongjang Fortress* (Mokpo, Korea: Mokpo University Museum, 1990); Seongrak Choi and et al. *Jindo Yongjang Mountain Fortress* (Mokpo, Korea: Mokpo University Museum, 2006).
- 49 Cheju Island, *Historical Site of Koryŏ's Resistance to Mongol in Hangpaduri, Cheju*, 1998
- 50 Yonghyuck Yoon's "Koryŏ's Entrance into Islands and Mongol's Change in its Strategy," *Korean History Education*, Vol. 32 (1982) should be referred for the strategy of Koryŏ's entrance into islands in its resistant period to Mongol.
- 51 The proportion of reclaimed land in Kanghai Island comes up to 130 km², one thirds of total space. Wide level land of 10 meters below the sea level is mostly artificial plain via reclamation, nearly all of which was reclaimed in Kanghai's capital period of Koryŏ Dynasty. Youngjoon Choi, 186-7 and 226.
- 52 Hanyang University Museum, *Excavation Report on Old Tombs of Koryŏ in Yookgok, Taebu Island, Ansan*, 2002
- 53 Since the underwater investigation of Shinan in 1976, thirteen different cases of underwater excavation have been performed up to 2006. Of those thirteen, ships were pulled up seven times. The period for all those thirteen trace back to Koryŏ (or Yuan), two of which including Shinan Ship are related to China (Yuan). To find out more, Seongbeom Kim's article, "Underwater Excavation of Cultural Heritage in Korea and Underwater Remains of Shinan," *Shinan Ship and East Asian Ceramic Trade* (Mokpo, Korea: National Maritime Museum, 2006): 198-205 should be referred.
- 54 The most important bases for the verification of the time of the coastal

underwater remains are chronicle time of porcelain (celadon porcelain) and carbon dating measurement data on the ship. However, the dating of coastal underwater remains must be comprehensively considered and further examined based on their geographical and historical backgrounds. For example, a Koryŏ ship found near Taebu Island (Ansan, Kyungkido) in December 2006 was estimated to be from ‘the late twelfth century to the early thirteenth century’ based on the chronicle time of porcelain which may be examined to be possibly from the thirteenth century in historical and geographical aspects. Taebu Island and Youngheung Island were the representative entry points for Kyungki region in the thirteenth century where a number of systematic entries were made under the supervision of local governor. It happened to be a migration route for Sambyulcho as well. The chronicle dating of porcelain is useful to estimate the date of site, but their manufacturing date may not agree with the chronicle of site as a characteristic of record of one’s life. Thus, the Koryŏ Ship found near Taebu Island might have been remains from Koryŏ’s resistant history to Mongol in the thirteenth century. In other words, this ship might have been used to enter and depart the people living on the coast or to transport cargo.

〈국문초록〉

고려·몽골전쟁사의 주요 논점

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본고는 13세기 몽골의 침입으로 야기된 고려·몽골 전쟁 연구에서 제기된 몇 가지 주제에 대하여 그동안의 논의를 소개하면서 필자의 의견을 덧붙여 정리한 것이다. 무엇이 고려의 장기항전을 가능하게 하였는가, 몽골군은 왜 강화도를 공격하지 않았는가, 고려의 대몽항전은 단계적으로 발전하였는가, 삼별초는 항몽의 불꽃인가 아니면 반민중의 정치군인인가 등의 질문이 그것이다. 그리고 여기에 ‘고려·몽골전쟁의 고고학’이라는 제목으로 유적과 유물 등 현장 자료를 통한 13세기 이해의 중요성에 대해서도 언급하였다.

그동안의 논의에서는 항몽전쟁에 대한 무인정권의 공과(功過)에 대한 극단적 의견차가 있어왔고 이 전쟁에 있어서 농민 천민 등 고려 인민들의 역할에 대한 높은 평가가 수반되었다. 이에 대하여 필자는 고려 인민들의 역할을 높게 평가하면서도 이를 ‘인민들만’의 공이라는 배타적 역할론에 대해서는 반대 하였다. 전쟁의 전개에 따라 항전의 단계가 발전해간다는 북한 사학의 대몽항전 발전 단계론에 대해서도 비판적 의견을 개진하였다. 고려의 대몽항전이 정권의 정치적 입장에 의하여 결정되었다는 점에서 무인정권의 반몽 항전책이 비판될 요소를 안고 있는 것이 사실이지만 정권적 한계라는 관점 때문에 항전의 의미를 원천적으로 부정하는 평가를 내리는 것도 공정한 평가가 아니라는 것이 필자의 생각이다.

주제어: 고려의 대몽항전, 강화도, 최씨무인정권, 삼별초