Main Points of Contention in Terms of the Studies on Tan’gun and Kojosŏn

Cho Bup Jong(Cho Pŏpchong)*

Introduction

Kojosŏn(古朝鮮) is widely understood to be the first political body in the history of Korea. Within the paradigm of Korean history, Kojosŏn is perceived as having been composed of three political bodies with different characteristics: ‘Tan’gun(檀君),’ ‘Kija(箕子)’ , and ‘Wiman(衛滿)’. While references to the founding myth of Kojosŏn and to its mythological founder Tan’gun first appear in the <Samguk yusa(三國遺事, Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea)>, and the <Jewang Ungi(帝王韻紀 Songs of Emperors and Kings>>, the state of Kojosŏn’s relations with China are dealt with in the <Wiryak(魏略)’>, a work often cited in the <Sanguo zhi(三國志, Chronicles of the Three Kingdoms). The archaeological and cultural evidence uncovered to date would seem to indicate that Kojosŏn spanned from the Bronze Age, which is characterized by lute-shaped bronze daggers, dolmens, and stone tombs, to the Iron Age. Evidence of Kojosŏn culture, which is unlike anything produced during the Chinese Bronze Age, has been found on the Liaodong Peninsula, in Northeast Manchuria, and on the Korean peninsula itself. In particular, Kojosŏn is known to have established extensive relations with Chinese political groups, who referred to it as Chosŏn, during the Warring States period, as well as during the transition

* Professor, Dept. of histirical education, Woosuk University
between Qin(秦) and Han(漢). By the onset of the Wiman Chosŏn era, Kojosŏn had forged diplomatic ties with horse-riding nomads such as the Xiongnu(匈奴).

While such political, military, and economic exchanges with Chinese states allowed Kojosŏn to accumulate a wide range of experiences, this also meant that changes in its capital area and in its sphere of influence accompanied its inevitable political ebbs and flows. However, the most hotly debated issue when it comes to Kojosŏn revolves around the location of its capital area. In this regard, three prevailing schools of thought can be found. The first is the Pyŏngyang-centric view, which argues that Kojosŏn’s capital was located on the Korean peninsula, or more exactly, in the P’yŏngyang area. The second school of thought is the Liaodong-centric view which sees the capital area as having been located in the Liaohe or Daling River basins situated in the Liaodong area. Meanwhile, the third school of thought is one which stresses a theory in which Kojosŏn’s capital area was at some point moved from Liaodong to the Daedong River basin area. In other words, there remain several historical and geographical debates as to the location of P’aesu(浿水) and of the capital area of Wanggŏmsŏng(王儉城) amongst scholars concerned with the study of Kojosŏn.

Kojosŏn’s constant warfare with the Han during the Wiman Chosŏn era eventually resulted in its political collapse and subsequent incorporation within the so-called ‘Four Chinese Commanderies’(漢郡縣). However, these Chinese Commanderies, with the exception of Lo-lang, which consisted of pro-Chinese native groups, were eventually destroyed by Koguryŏ(高句麗), which allowed Kojosŏn’s history to be continued through its successor states. This study will present a basic summary of the various manners in which Kojosŏn and Tan’gun are perceived; thereafter, a review of the historical significance of Kojosŏn and Tan’gun within the overall perception of Korean ancient history will be conducted.
Studies on Tan’gun and Kojosŏn

Perception of traditional scholars

From the outset, the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910) established a structure in which its legitimacy was based on their link to Tan’gun and the Kija sajŏn(箕子祀典). In his <Chosŏn Kyŏnggukjŏn(朝鮮經國典, Administrative Code of Chosŏn)> Chŏng Tojŏn argued that the new state should be called Chosŏn in order to accentuate the historical link with Tan’gun Chosŏn, Kija Chosŏn and Wiman Chosŏn. This process of gaining legitimacy by linking with the past was given further life in works such as Kwŏn Kŭn’s <Tongguk saryak(東國史略)> and Rho Sasin’s <Samguksa chŏlyo(三國史節要)>. The Tan’gun shrine was built to legitimatize this understanding of history. References to Tan’gun can be found in works which emphasize his own historical existence such as the Chiriji section of the <Sejong sillok(世宗實錄地理志)> and the Tongguk yŏji sŏngnam(東國與地勝覽, Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea). Following its inclusion in the <Ŭngjesi(應制詩)> and the <Yongbiŏch’ŏnga(龍飛御天歌, Songs of Flying Dragons)> the Tan’gun creation myth became further simplified and rationalized as it became incorporated in works which related the official history of the Chosŏn Dynasty, such as the <Tongguk t’onggam(東國通鑑, Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Kingdom)>.

The strengthening of the military system and growing interest in Koguryŏ which emerged during the reign of King Sejo resulted in the emergence in such works as the <Ŭngje siju(應製詩注)> of a view in which the Liaodong area was regarded as having fallen within the territory of Kojosŏn. Moreover, the above-mentioned work also contained a reference to Puru’s, one of Tan’gun’s sons, participation in the so-called ‘Tosan Hwejip(gathering at Mt. Tosan)’. This trend, which was linked to an
ethics-based view of history that emphasized the fact that politics should be conducted by a virtuous king, resulted in the weakening of the status of Tan’gun during the 16th century. Thereafter, a phenomenon characterized by the increased importance placed on Chinese culture, with Kija at the center, took root that lasted until the onset of the 17th century. In turn, this phenomenon, as well as the seemingly consecutive invasions which Chosŏn experienced as China fell under the control of the Qing Dynasty, resulted in increasing the appeal of the notion of Sojunghwa (the view that Chosŏn was in fact a small China), and served as the framework for the adoption of Zhu Xi’s Kangmokch’ŏ style of historical description.

In the <Tongguk chiriji> (Treatise on Korean Geography), Han Paekkyŏm criticized the existing three Chosŏn theory on the grounds that Chosŏn and the Han had in fact existed simultaneously. The emergence of a new historical and geographical viewpoint, as well as of new factions advocating such ideas, began to be reflected in historical works published during the latter half of the 17th century, works which were based on the legitimacy theory. Consequently, the works of scholars such as Hŏ Mok and Hong Manjong had the effect of strengthening Tan’gun’s status. This was followed later on by a further enhancement of his status as a result of the emergence of the independent position advanced by Sirak (Practical Learning) scholars, and An Chŏngbok’s reassertion of the link between Tongi, Tan’gun and Kija culture, which had the effect of once again placing the emphasis on cultural independence. In the aftermath of the emergence of the Enlightenment movement following the opening of Chosŏn, Tan’gun’s status, as reflected in history textbooks, was, while to a certain degree based on the traditional arguments developed in the past, somewhat weakened. This change occurred as a result of the emergence of a school of thought which tried to link Kija Chosŏn to the Enlightenment movement.
Japanese historians’ perception during the colonial era

During the colonial era, Japanese historians went to great lengths to develop distorted and prejudicial theories about Korean history which could be used to justify their occupation of Korea. In this regard, their basic position regarding Tan’gun and Kojosŏn, which are widely regarded as representing the first chapter of Korean history, did not focus on the characteristics of Kojosŏn and Tan’gun as the forbearers of the Korean nation, but rather on the Chinese Commanderies which were established on what had previously been Kojosŏn territory after the latter’s collapse following its defeat at the hands of Emperor Wu of the Former Han, a campaign which came as part of the latter’s eastern expansion policy. Despite a total lack of concrete research on Kojosŏn, Japanese historians essentially replaced the history of Kojosŏn with the history of Lo-lang and the other Chinese Commanderies.

From an archeological standpoint, Japanese scholars adopted the basic position that the flow of iron culture which accompanied the establishment of the Chinese Commanderies on the Korean peninsula had the effect of incorporating bronze and iron into the indigenous stone culture of Kojosŏn. This negative and distorted perception of Korean history denied the existence of Tan’gun, arguing that historical references to Tan’gun Chosŏn had in effect been fabricated by later generations. Japanese scholars’ main focus when it came to Korean ancient history became that of identifying the period in which the Chinese Commanderies were established, as well as its geographical and historical location. The most hotly discussed issues of the day were the geographical and historical location of Lo-lang; in this regard, scholars were of different opinions when it came to the location of P’aesu, which was believed to be either the Yesŏng, Taedong, Ch’ŏngch’ŏn or Yalu(Amnok) River.

Meanwhile, archeological discoveries during this period focused on relics related to the Commanderies, with little to no mention of any evidence of Kojosŏn culture made. Excavating efforts focused solely on
Lo-lang tombs that possessed Chinese-style relics, and on the highlighting of the culture of the Commanderies\textsuperscript{18}. In 1927, the first volume of *Lo-lang Era Relics*\textsuperscript{(樂浪郡時代の遺蹟)} was published and used as archaeological evidence of the existence of Lo-lang culture, a part of Chinese culture, in the P’yŏngyang area. In the 1930s Japan organized the Society for Chosŏn Relics\textsuperscript{18}. This body soon became actively involved in research, publishing from 1933 onwards a series of works known as the *Report on the Investigation into Relics*\textsuperscript{19} in which a summary of the result of the excavations of ancient tombs in the P’yŏngyang area was presented.\textsuperscript{19} Researchers concerned with the issue of Lo-lang and the Society for Chosŏn Relics joined hands to publish large and lavish special hardbound reports such as <*Lo-Lang: Tomb of Ogwanyŏn wangwu*\textsuperscript{20}, <*Lo-Lang Ch’aehwa Tomb*\textsuperscript{21}, and <*Lo-Lang Wang Kwang’s Tomb*\textsuperscript{22}. For the most part, these works contained vivid descriptions of the ample relics and of the people buried inside these ancient tombs.

These excavating activities were conducted in a fashion that meshed with Japanese archeologists’ perception of Korean ancient history, namely that Wiman Chosŏn had been destroyed by the forces of Emperor Wu of the Former Han Dynasty, who subsequently established four commanderies in the area formerly occupied by Chosŏn. The development of the Chosŏn tribes that inhabited the Korean peninsula was thus particularly influenced by one of these commanderies, Lo-lang, which existed in the P’yŏngyang area for 400 years.

The work conducted by positivist and nationalist historians

While Japanese scholars focused on the history of the Four Commanderies, Korean nationalist and positivist historians’ efforts were focused, as part of their attempts to lay the foundation for the establishment of a national history, on Tan’gun and Kojosŏn. In terms of the research conducted on Tan’gun during this period, one must single out the significant contribution made by Ch’oe Namsŏn to the efforts to
counter Japanese attempts to deny the very existence of Tan’gun. Ch’oe established a macroscopic historical framework, the so-called *Pulham munhwaron* (不咸文化論), or theory that Oriental culture originated from Mt. Paekdu with the Korean nation at the center, which involved focusing on both traditional and more recent materials related to Tan’gun in order to further the general perception of the history of Kojosŏn.

In particular, Ch’oe Namsŏn paid special attention to the bear and the tiger found in the Tan’gun creation myth, while emphasizing the Totemist aspect represented by these two animals. He emphasized the fact that the presence of the *Ungmo* (Mother Bear) in this myth was proof of the presence of a maternal society. In addition, he also delved into the etymology of the word Tan’gun, which he advanced had its origins in the term ‘tanggul (shaman),’ meaning the representative of heaven. Meanwhile, Wanggŏm is a term used for a king, especially a shaman-king. Therefore, Tan’gun Wanggŏm means the king of heaven or the king of shamans. The *Pulham munhwaron* can be summarized as the belief that the Korean race developed in accordance with its own indigenous thought (*Light Worship*) and within its own unique cultural sphere.

Meanwhile, Sin Ch’aeho’s perception of the Tan’gun myth, which was based on the assumption that Kojosŏn consisted of three Chosŏns, namely, Sin, Pul, and Mal Chosŏn, led him to argue that the main sphere of these three Chosŏns had been in the Liaoxi and Liaodong areas. He defined Tan’gun as the heroic chief who prior to the establishment of the three Chosŏns founded a *Sinsudu* (the biggest and most powerful village within a group of villages) and who worshipped the god of light (*Kwangmyŏnsin*), one of the heavenly gods. Sin argued that prior to the arrival of Confucianism and Buddhism the Korean peninsula had been home to an indigenous religion known as the *Nangga sasang* which had originally been founded by Tan’gun. Sin attempted to reorganize the history of the Tan’gun Kingdom based on this particular argument. Building on Sin’s position, Chŏng Inbo attempted to further the perception that Kojosŏn had indeed been based in the Liaodong area. Chŏng adopted a position which was strongly opposed to the issues raised by Japanese scholars as it
pertained to the Four Commanderies. To emphasize the point that the war with the Han had in effect continued unabated, Chŏng relabeled the four Commanderies the ‘Four Military Zones(漢四郡役)’. Chŏng also listed the fabricated nature of the lutes which were uncovered, as well as discrepancies associated with the Chŏmsŏnbi(monument erected in the Yonggang area of P’yŏngnam) and with the Munja myŏngwadang (decorative roof tiles on which certain Chinese characters can be found) as some of the problems with the so-called Lo-lang relics. Chŏng’s views are noteworthy in that they greatly influenced the perception of North Korean scholars.26

Research conducted by North Korean academia

The studies on Kojosŏn conducted by North Korean scholars went through four different stages.27 The first stage can be said to have unfolded from the period immediately following independence(1945) to the early 1960’s. The research conducted from 1945 until the mid-1950s laid the foundation for future discussions and academic work. While the second stage unfolded between 1963 and 1973, the third occurred between 1973 and 1993. The fourth and current stage began with the excavation of Tan’gun’s tomb in 1993.

When it comes to the debate over the location of the capital area of Kojosŏn, which as mentioned above has featured three different possibilities, South Korean scholars have tended to favor either the Liaodong or relocation hypotheses at the expense of the Korean peninsula view. However, while the Liaodong hypothesis was the dominant view in North Korea until the discovery and restoration of the Tan’gun tomb in 1993, this discovery has brought about a sea change in terms of the focus of Tan’gun related studies and of the location of the capital area, with the Korean peninsula hypothesis now being most widely accepted. In keeping with this trend, some scholars have argued that the Wanggŏmsŏng and Lo-lang Commandery were in fact situated in different locations.

These trends highlight the need for an overall review of the issue of the
location and general perceptions of Kojoșon in order to spur further discussions on the topic. In other words, discussions related to the location of Kojoșon should be based on further analysis of the documents pertaining to Kojoșon and archaeological recreations.

Current trends in the research on Kojoșon

The current view of Kojoșon is based on the enhancement of existing opinions and the introduction of new positions. Building on existing literature on the topic of Kojoșon, Kim Chŏngbae conducted more in-depth research on the literature and archaeological materials related to Kojoșon. Kim has suggested a systematic framework for analyzing the history of Kojoșon which is based on a critical assessment of the direction which North Korean scholars have taken following the excavation of Tan’gun’s tomb and a thorough critical review of the work conducted by Chinese archaeologists.28

As part of his comprehensive review of Northeast Asian lute-shaped bronze dagger culture, Kim uncovered that lute-shaped bronze daggers and *Heongi pugo kyŏngho*29 were in fact found amongst the traditional dolmen and stone-chamber tombs discovered in the Liaodong area. With this in mind, Kim has insisted that Yemaek Chosŏn(or what is more commonly known as Kija Chosŏn), as well as its capital area, must have been situated in this region. For his part, Song Hojong has defined the Upper Xiajiadian culture which developed in the Liaoxi area between the Daling and Liaohe Rivers as the culture of the Sanyung tribe(山戎族), and the Liaoning-type bronze dagger culture which developed in the Liaodong area as an example of Yemaek culture. Song has maintained that the Bronze Age culture uncovered in the Liaodong area is closely related to that of Kojoșon.30

The culture of this area was characterized by the presence of dolmens, *Misongni* and top-shaped pottery. The general perception has been that at some point in the fourth century B.C Kojoșon, in conjunction with Yen(燕) established control over the Yemaek tribes in this area. Thereafter,
an attack launched by the Yen in the third century B.C. forced Kojosŏn to continue its national expansion south of the Ch’ŏngch’ŏn River. Meanwhile, Sŏ Yŏngsu has developed a new understanding of the characteristics of Lo-lang Commandery. Sŏ advanced the possibility that Chinese influence may have waned sometime after the establishment of the Lo-lang Commandery; thus allowing an autonomous state led by migrants from China to form in the area.\(^{31}\)

Meanwhile, Cho Bup-jong has argued that the complete collapse of Wiman Chosŏn occurred in 107 B.C. and not 108 B.C. Cho maintains that the Lo-lang Commandery was in fact established in a different location than Wanghŏmsŏng prior to the latter’s collapse as the capital of Wiman Chosŏn. Moreover, this capital city was in reality linked to the eventual location of the Hsuantu Commandery(Hyŏndo).\(^{32}\) Based on his analysis of Koguryŏ-era mural paintings, Cho has raised the possibility that the Sonobu, which produced the former royal family of the Koguryŏ dynasty, maintained the Tan’gun myth as its own creation myth.\(^{33}\) For his part, based on his own analysis of the relevant literature and remains, Kim Namjung has argued that Wanghŏmsŏng was not located in the P’yŏngyang area, but closer to the Yalu River. This particular approach, which has raised some heated debates, has come as part of efforts to link Wanghŏmsŏng to the original location of Koguryŏ.\(^{34}\)

A look at all the various viewpoints pertaining to the issues of the capital and territory of Kojosŏn reveals that the majority of the documents related to the location of Kojosŏn are concerned with the names of places located in areas in which Kojosŏn came into contact with China. Therefore, the various viewpoints adopted by scholars have in large part been based on differences in the interpretation of these materials. As such, discussions should begin with a thorough analysis of the historical records related to the relationship between Kojosŏn and Yen during the Warring States period, as well as the locations of Liaodong, Chinjangsŏng(秦長城), Manbŏnhan((滿番汗), P’aesu, Wanggŏmsŏng, and the Four Commanderies established by the Han, and especially of the Lo-lang Commandery.
Perceptions of Kojosŏn Territory

Previous research on Kojosŏn territory has been focused on the conflicts between Wiman Chosŏn and the Han dynasty, and the establishment of the Four Commanderies. In accordance with this trend, three dominant schools of thought have surfaced with regard to the location of the capital area of Kojosŏn, namely, the Korean peninsula, Liaodong and relocation hypotheses.

The Korean peninsula hypothesis

The view that Kojosŏn was located in the Taedong River area of the Korean peninsula is prominent amongst Chinese and traditional Korean scholars.

In his work <Shuijingzhu (水經注, Commentary to the River Classic)> the scholar Li Daoyuan (酈道元) (469-527) of Northern Wei argued that the Lo-lang Commandery was situated in P’yŏngyang and Wanghŏmsŏng was in fact the Chosŏnhyon. Xue Zhan, who was cited in the work <Shihchi souyin (史記索隱)> also connected Wanghŏmsŏng to the Lo-lang Commandery. The <Kuodizhi (括地志)>, published during the Tang Dynasty, also maintained the same view. Thereafter, this view became the official position following its inclusion in by Du You (杜佑)’s <Tongdian (通典)>.

In the case of Korea, the author of the <Samgukyusa>, Ilyŏn, was the first to advance this position. In his record on Tan’gun Chosŏn, Ilyŏn linked most of the relevant geographical names to the area surrounding P’yŏngyang. Meanwhile, the <Tongguk t’onggam> and <Tongguk yŏji sŏngnam>, both of which were compiled during the early period of the Chosŏn Dynasty, placed the capital area of Kojosŏn south of the Yalu River.

Another possible location on the Korean peninsula which was advanced by Japanese scholars and Yi Pyŏngdo during the colonial era
was the Taedong River era. In large part, Japanese scholars used this theory as a historical tool to legitimize their colonization of Korea. To this end, the Japanese presented the Chinese relics and remains found in the P’yŏngyang area which were excavated in the 1930s as the evidence which confirmed their theory.\(^41\)

While some archeologists in North Korea, led by To Yuho, used the relics and remains found in the early 1960’s as proof of the veracity of their hypothesis that P’yŏngyang was in fact the central area of Kojosŏn, this position was eventually all but abandoned in favor of the Liaodong hypothesis; that is, until the recent discovery of Tan’gun’s tomb, which has led to the reemergence of the P’yŏngyang as center theory.\(^42\) In other words, North Korean academics now believe that Tan’gun Chosŏn’s territory, which had P’yŏngyang on the Korean peninsula as its center, eventually expanded to reach the upper realms of the Liaohe and Songhua Rivers. As its boundary with China became the Lianhua River(淶河) during Later Chosŏn(Kija Chosŏn), Chosŏn found itself increasingly at odds with the Yen(燕) and Chin(秦). North Korean scholars now believe that the current Daling River was in fact the P’aesu, and that this was the site where Later Chosŏn confronted the Han. They also believe that the Han eventually attacked the capital area of Wanggŏmsŏng, and subsequently established the Four Chinese Commanderies in that area.\(^43\)

The Liaodong hypothesis

The theory that Kojosŏn was located in the Liaodong area has in large been based on the fact that Kojosŏn-related Chinese records have placed the capital of Wiman Chosŏn, Wanghŏmsŏng, in Xianjixian, Changli.\(^44\) In the "Shihchi jijie(史記集解)" written during the Southern Song period, Pei Yin quoted Xu Guang(徐廣) of the Later Han dynasty’s view that a Xianjixian(險濟縣) existed in Changli(昌黎).\(^45\) Meanwhile, in the "Shihchi souyin", which was compiled during the Tang Dynasty, Ssuma chien, quoting Xu Guang and Ying Zhao(應昭) of the Later Han, wrote that Xianjixian in Liaodong was the site of the old capital city of Chosŏn. As
such, their position can be summarized as follows: the ancient capital city of Chosŏn, Wanghŏmsŏng, was situated in Xianjixian.46

In the case of Korean documents, the view that the center of power of Kojosŏn was situated in the Liaodong area first appeared in the <Eŭngje Siju> written by Kwŏn Ram. Thereafter, in the <Tongguk t’onggam chegang>, Hong Yŏha postulated that Chenfan (Chinbŏn) was situated in Liaoyang, while the P’aesu was in fact the Liaohe River, thus supporting the Liaodong hypothesis. Other scholars such as Sin Kyŏngjun and Yi Ik also believed that the capital of Kojosŏn was situated in the Liaodong area.47 The view of these Ch'ŏson scholars was eventually inherited by others such as Sin Ch’aeho, Ch’oe Namsŏn, An Chaehong and Chŏng Inbo. Moreover, this hypothesis also became widely accepted amongst North Korean scholars from the early 1960s onwards.48 While North Korean scholars were originally split between the Liaodong, P’yŏngyang and relocation theories, the work of scholars such as Yi Chirin eventually resulted in the widespread acceptance of the Liaodong hypothesis.49 However, this view has come under attack once again following the discovery of the tomb of Tan’gun. The P’yŏngyang hypothesis has once again gained ground, with the Liaodong area now perceived as having been incorporated later on as a result of territorial expansion. In this regard, South Korean scholar Yun Naehyŏn has adopted a similar position.50

Relocation hypothesis

The relocation theory, which effectively combines the Liaodong and P’yŏngyang hypotheses, was introduced as a new way of interpreting the documents and archaeological data related to Kojosŏn found in the above-mentioned two locations. This hypothesis is based on the argument that while the Liaodong area was the original center of power of Kojosŏn, the expansion of Chinese influence in the area eventually forced Kojosŏn, whose territory was now under attack, to relocate its capital to the northwestern area of the Korean peninsula. Ch’ŏn Kwanwu’s perception
Main Points of Contention in Terms of the Studies on Tan’gun and Kojosŏn

of the relocation of Kojosŏn has been based on the Kija migration theory found in historical records. For his part, Yi Hyŏnggu believes that refugees from Yin(殷) led by Kija, founded Kija Chosŏn after Yin was expelled by Zhou(周) from the Daling River area during the late Yin and early Zhou era. Furthermore, he argues that Kija Chosŏn existed for nearly 1,000 years, or from the migration of Kija in the 12-11th century B.C. until the reign of King Chun in the early 2nd century B.C. Meanwhile, Sŏ Yongsu has argued that at its peak, the territory of Kojosŏn, with the Liaodong area at the center, stretched westwards to the area adjacent to the Daling River where they bordered the Eastern Hu, southwards to the Taedong River, which separated them from the Chin, while on its northern and eastern borders one found the Yamaek, Puyŏ, Chenfan, Lintun(Imdun) and Suchen(Suksin). Rho Taedon meanwhile has maintained that the Liaodong region served as Kojosŏn’s capital area until the early part of the 3rd century B.C. Rho has stressed that while the central location of early Kojosŏn lay somewhere southwest of Haicheng xian(海城縣) and Gaiping xian(盖平縣), a surprise attack by Yen eventually forced it to relocate to the Korean peninsula. This relocation theory made some headway amongst certain North Korean scholars, most notably Chŏng Ch’anyŏng, during the early 1960s.

Issues Related to the Records of Tan’gun

Historical records related to Kojosŏn’s Tan’gun creation myth can be found in works such as Ilyŏn’s <Samguk yusa> and Yi Sŭnghyu’s <Chewang un’gi(帝王韻紀)>, both of which were written during the Koryŏ Dynasty. Other pertinent documents can be found in the <Sejong sillok chiriji(世宗實錄 地理志)> and Kwŏn Ram’s <Ŭngje siju(應制詩註)> written during the early Chosŏn Dynasty. Of these, the <Samguk yusa> has been regarded as being the most pertinent when it comes to the accuracy of the records related to Kojosŏn.

As the contents of the Tan’gun myth found in the <Samguk yusa> were
taken from the *<Weishu*(魏書, History of Wei)*> and *<Kogi*(古記, Ancient Records)*, we can surmise that both the *<Samguk yusa>* and *<Chewang un’gi>* in effect cited records which were taken from previously compiled works. As such, while the *<Samguk yusa>* quoted the *<Kogi>* , the *<Chewang un’gi>* cited the *<Pon’gi>*. Therefore, by the 13th century various records related to the Tan’gun myth already existed, however, their contents and the names found within varied depending on whether the author cited the *<Kogi>* or the *<Pon’gi>*.

The *<Kyuwŏn sahwa>* (揆園史話), which was compiled during the latter period of Chosŏn, took issue with the discrepancies found in the *<Samguk yusa>* in terms of the Tan’gun-related records. Most scholars agreed that the *<Hwandan kogi>* (桓檀古記) and *<Tan’gi kosa>* (檀奇古史), which have been regarded as the most representative private works on Tan’gun, were actually fabricated by later generations. However, two different opinions have emerged with regards to the *<Kyuwŏn sahwa>* (揆園史話), while one camp has argued that it was a Taoist history book written during the reign of King Sukjong of the Chosŏn Dynasty, the other has maintained that the work was actually penned in the early 20th century.

Among the studies related to Tan’gun conducted during the modern era, Ch’oe Namsŏn identified the word, Tan’gun as having its origins in the term ‘tanggul(shaman)’, meaning the representative of heaven. Wanggŏm is a term used for a king, especially a shaman-king. Therefore, Tan’gun Wanggŏm means the king of heaven or the king of shamans.\(^{56}\) Meanwhile, Sin Ch’aeho’s perception of the Tan’gun myth, which was based on the assumption that Kojosŏn consisted of three Chosŏns, namely, Sin, Pul, and Mal Chosŏn, led him to argue that the main sphere of these three Chosŏns had been in the Liaoxi and Liaodong areas. He defined Tan’gun as the heroic chief who prior to the establishment of the three Chosŏn founded a *Sinsudu* (the biggest and most powerful village within a group of villages) and who worshipped the god of light(*Kwangmyŏngsin*), one of the heavenly gods.\(^{57}\)

Conversely, Kim Chaewŏn linked the stone-carved portraits found in the Wu family shrine located in the Shandong peninsula to the Tan’gun
Main Points of Contention in Terms of the Studies on Tan’gun and Kojosŏn

For his part, Yi Pyŏngdo argued that the Tan’gun myth was based on the fable of how Tan’gun was the offspring of the union of Hwanung and Ungnyŏ, who belonged respectively to the heavenly tribe and the earthly Koma tribe. Yi maintained that the word Tan’gun in effect denotes a religious leader, while Wanggŏm connotes a political leader. Meanwhile, Kim Chŏnghak claimed that the Tan’gun myth was in fact a combination of two religious myths: the solar myth based on the Hwanin-Hwanung-Ch’ŏnson lineage, and the totemism myth based on the Ungnyŏ-Tan’gun lineage.

Yi Kibaik argued that the Tan’gun myth contains religious elements of Shamanism and social elements of what we can refer to as Totemism. Yi never recognized the existence of Kija Chosŏn, but rather insisted that Tan’gun Chosŏn equaled Kojosŏn, and that the Tan’gun myth was established at the time of the foundation of Kojosŏn. Meanwhile, Ch’ŏn Kwanwu has claimed that the Tan’gun myth has its origins in the formation of the Han, Ye, and Maek tribes, from which the Korean nation emerged, and in the agrarian culture which emerged as a result of the appearance of farmers. Yi Chongwuk went to great lengths to emphasize the point that Tan’gun-related records were in fact nothing more than mythical, and that the chronology of the Tan’gun myth had in fact been written by subsequent generations. Thus, Yi argued that Kojosŏn was formed at the end of the 12th century B.C., a period in which Chinese migrants began to exert political influence over the area which became Kojosŏn. He perceived the tribes indigenous to the Kojosŏn area as having belonged to a so-called ‘bear group’; meanwhile the Chinese migrants belonged to a tiger group. Those Chinese migrants who established a relationship with the bear group came to be known as the Hwanung group, which would in time become the main force behind the foundation of the state of Kojosŏn. This particular perception, which emphasizes the role of Chinese migrants in the Tan’gun myth and links the characteristics of Tan’gun to China, contains some inherently explosive attributes.

Kim Chŏngbae adopted the position that the Tan’gun myth was based
on the integration, or replacement, of indigenous Asian fishing tribes with North Mongolian agricultural tribes. In other words, Kim emphasized the fact that the Tan’gun myth was a remnant of the culture left behind by indigenous Asian tribes of the Neolithic Age who worshiped bears. Kim also stressed the fact that the people of Kija Chosŏn were not indigenous Asians, but rather belonged to the Altaic tribes which developed undecorated pottery culture. Kim claimed that while some signs of Chinese culture could be found in the area after the Warring States period, no such signs existed prior to this period. Based on the fact that no archaeological evidence of the arrival of Kija has ever been found, Kim denied the existence of Kija Chosŏn. Moreover, Kim disagrees with the assertion that Kija Chosŏn was in effect Han Chosŏn. Meanwhile, North Korean scholars have used the Koguryŏ-era mural paintings of bears and tigers found in the Kakch’ŏch’ŏng Tomb and the features of a hibernating bear found in Changch’ŏn Tomb #1 to raise the possibility that the existence of Tan’gun had already been recognized during the Koguryŏ era. Finally, Cho Bup-jong has argued that while Koguryŏ’s Tongmyŏng(Chumong:朱蒙) myth was the creation myth of the Kyeru tribe, the perception of Tan’gun is in fact rooted in the creation myth of the Sonobu led by King Songyang, who were the original founders of the Koguryŏ kingdom; thus, Cho maintains that the perception of Tan’gun can in effect be traced back to the foundation of Koguryŏ.

War between Wiman Chosŏn and the Han Dynasty

Around the 2nd century B.C. Wiman seized the reigns of power from the leading faction within Kojoyŏn, King Chun’s group, which had been locked in an ongoing battle with Yen since the 4–3rd century B.C. Under the leadership of Ugŏ(Wiman’s grandson), Wiman Chosŏn exercised strong military power that was based on its advanced iron culture. As part of their efforts to monopolize profits from intermediary trade, Wiman Chosŏn began to control the trade routes between adjacent political groups. Based on these facts, we can imagine a scenario in which Ugŏ
sought to establish a military alliance with the Xiongnu in order to counter the military pressure being applied by Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty. Thus, as the economic and military interests of Wiman Chosŏn under Ugo began to clash with those of the Han, Emperor Wu found himself with no other option but to attack Kojosŏn. As part of their efforts to aggressively counter the Xiongnu, the Han established the Four Commanderies in Hohsi (河西四郡), and subsequently dispatched She He (涉何) to reestablish good relations with Wiman Chosŏn. However, the negotiations soon broke down, and She Hewound up killing King Pi of Chosŏn. Upon his return, She He was appointed by the Emperor to the post of military commander of Liaodong’s eastern division. Angered by this appointment, Wiman Chosŏn launched an attack that resulted in the death of She He and the onset of the war with the Han.

Following their conquest of the Xiongnu and Southern Yue, the Han began around 110 B.C to make preparations for war Chosŏn. The campaign was officially launched in the autumn of 109 B.C. with a two-pronged attack on land and by sea. General Yang Pu (楊僕) led a force of 7,000 soldiers which departed from the Shandong peninsula and attacked Wanggŏmsŏng via the Bohai Sea (渤海). Meanwhile, Left-General Xun Zhi (荀彘) launched a ground attack from Chosŏn’s borders with Yen that involved 50,000 troops. While the Han navy had originally planned to wait for the main ground forces to launch a joint attack on Yŏlgu (列口), the late arrival of the ground forces made it such that the navy was forced to attack the Wanggŏmsŏng alone, an attack which was repelled by Chosŏn’s navy. On land, the Liaodong army was defeated by the forces of Wiman Chosŏn along the border running the length of the P’aesu; meanwhile, the main force was also defeated by Wiman Chosŏn west of the P’aesu. Having reached a deadlock, both armies began to sue for peace. To this end, Emperor Wu dispatched Wei Shan (衛山) to take part in peace talks. However, the strong line adopted by Wiman Chosŏn caused the peace talks to break off and Emperor Wu to direct Governor-General Gong Sun Sui (公孫遂) to launch a second attack on Kojosŏn. The ensuing year-long war created great internal rifts within the leadership of Wiman
Chosŏn that resulted in the murder of King Ugŏ and the flight of pro-Han members of the leadership. Wiman Chosŏn’s power began to wane, and even the valiant effort to fight to the end of the forces under the control of Sŏng Gi could not stop Wiman Chosŏn from falling into the hands of the Han in 108 B.C.

However, in the Chosŏn section of the *Shihchi (Historical Records)* one finds references to how Emperor Wu rewarded the people involved in the war after the end of hostilities which would seem to indicate that the military expedition to Wiman Chosŏn was in reality a failure. While General Yang Pu, who was the naval commander that led the original ill-fated expedition, was almost beheaded for his failure, the punishment was eventually commuted to life in exile. For his part, Xun Zhi, the commander of the ground forces, was found guilty of having created internal conflicts because of his failure to properly coordinate with other military leaders and was promptly beheaded, with his body thrown out on the street. Meanwhile, Wei Shan, who had overseen peace talks, was also beheaded because of his failure to achieve the desired results. Finally, Gong Sun Sui, who had been ordered to launch a second war against Wiman Chosŏn after the imprisonment of General Yang Pu, which in turn followed the failure of efforts to establish peace with Wiman Chosŏn, was also beheaded. To this end, Ssuma chien stated that the veracity of the assertion that the Han had in effect been defeated was supported by the fact that none of the generals who participated in the war with Wiman Chosŏn were promoted; rather all were either beheaded or exiled.

The fact that most of the generals responsible for the campaign against Wiman Chosŏn were either executed or demoted to the status of commoner proves that, although Wiman Chosŏn was eventually defeated, the actual waging of the war and post-war situation did not go entirely as the Han had planned. As a result of this war, the pro-war faction led by Ugŏ was replaced by a faction who favored a negotiated settlement with the Han. Although Wiman Chosŏn was reorganized into the Four Commanderies in order to ensure China’s direct control over the area, Wiman Chosŏn was able to preserve its inherent political structure.
The Four Commanderies were originally established as a means of establishing direct control over and restraining Kojošon and Koguryō. However, this objective was eventually abandoned as a result of the constant and sometimes violent opposition of native forces. These commanderies can thus be characterized as either an autonomous force led by Chinese migrants, or as a center for intermediary trade that coexisted with the native society. In particular, the rise of Koguryō during the Later Han period had the effect of seriously mitigating the Chinese Commanderies control over the former Kojošon area. In essence, as the Han’s grip on the area lessened before finally collapsing altogether, the area became a zone in which the Han(韓國), Ye(濊國), and Wae(倭國) interacted and conducted tributary trade. Meanwhile, given the characteristics of Lo-lang, which functioned as an intermediary zone for Chinese culture, the area should be evaluated as a cultural intermediary rather than a political body.

Conclusion

Future tasks and prospects will now be discussed based on the above contents.

The first task with regard to the research on Tan’gun must be that of overcoming the different perceptions which North and South Korean scholars possess. The current perception framework advanced by North Korean scholars, which is based on the restoration of Tan’gun’s tomb begun in 1993 and the Tan’gun and P’yŏngyang location theories, should be expanded somewhat to include a systematic analysis of existing relics and remains on the part of both North and South Korean historians. In addition, the present situation is such that although discussions are being carried out, no concrete movement has been made on the establishment of a comprehensive framework. This issue is also closely linked to the gap that exists between official academia and individual historians. As such, continuous discussions are required.
Despite heated debates, the question of the location of the central area of Kojosŏn remains resolved. As this question has already become a crucial issue in the field of history, a new and more concrete methodology should be devised that is based on archeological excavations and the conducting of related analyses. In particular, there is a need to conduct in-depth studies on such topics as the lute-shaped bronze dagger culture and Sehyŏng tonggŏm(a short and finely wrought bronze dagger) culture, both of which are regarded as forming the backbone of Kojosŏn culture, as well as on the related pottery culture. In this regards, Chinese scholars have already conducted discussions on the characteristics of these cultures and on the relationship between various relics; however, such discussions have been based on biased archeological reports. As such, there is need to proceed in a more systematic fashion. In other words, the current backdrop in which Chinese, North and South Korean scholars have adopted different positions, and China has had unique access to the Liaodong area needs to be altered in favor of the conducting of joint research amongst the three countries’ scholars and the abandonment of biased interpretations. As China has through its Northeast Asian Project actively distorted not only the history of Kojosŏn but of Koguryŏ as well, the issue of the central location of Kojosŏn continues to be an important one. In addition, researchers need to take a clear stand on the actual location of Wanggŏmsŏng(or Wanghŏmsŏng). In this regard, vague references to an area in Liaodong or around Pyŏngyang need to be abandoned in favor of concrete assertions arrived at through comprehensive studies. The issues surrounding the location of Wiman Chosŏn remains are directly related to the interpretation of the Lo-lang relics uncovered in the P’yŏngyang area. There is thus a need to explain the characteristics of Lo-lang, and the periodic changes it underwent, in a more concrete fashion. This issue is also connected to the analysis of the national characteristics of Wiman Chosŏn and of the Four Chinese Commanderies, and represents an important task, as it will lay the foundation for a new interpretation of the many Lo-lang remains which have already been discovered. Moreover, this issue is also related to the
resolution of the spatial and temporal gap which exists between the
collapse of Wiman Chosŏn and the forces which arose to take its place.
The importance of conducting in-depth studies on this topic have been
further highlighted by the emergence of the position that Wiman Chosŏn
may have actually collapsed in 107 BC when the Hsuantu Commandery
was established, and the assertion that Lo-lang and the Wanggŏmsŏng
were established in different locations.

The historical legacy of Kojosŏn represents another important question
which must be addressed. To this end, an archaeological analysis of
Kojosŏn’s cultural legacy in terms of ensuing historical bodies should be
conducted, as should a historical analysis of ensuing states’ perception as
the successors of Kojosŏn. In other words, the relationship between
surrounding political forces such as Koguryŏ and Puyŏ, which became
significant political forces following the establishment of Kojosŏn’s
founding culture, and Kojosŏn should be thoroughly reviewed. As this
issue is also directly related to the perception of Tan’gun, continuous
studies are required.

Key Words: Kojosŏn, Tan’gun, Kija, Wiman, <Jewang Ungi>, Wanggŏmsŏng,
Four Chinese Commanderies, Debate over the location of the capital area of
Kojosŏn, Chinjangsŏng, P’aesu, Koguryŏ, <Eŭngje Siju>, Han, Ye, Wae,
<Kyuwŏn sahw>, <Hwandan kogi>, <Tan’gi kosa>, Chumong, Bohai Sea,
<Samguk yusa>

Notes:

1 T’aejo Sillok Vol.1, August of the First Year of King T´aejo; Cho Pak claimed
that while Tan’gun was in fact King Sisumyŏngji, Kija was King
Sihŭngganghwaji. Cho identified each as the founders of the nation state and
originators of culture. Kang Man’gil, “Tan’gun worship during the Chosŏn
dynasty-With a special focus on the articles compiled in the Sillo(Yijo sidaeŭi
tan’gun sungbae – sillok kisarŭl chungsimŭro)” Collection of Essays on
Korean History to Commemorate the 60th Birthday of Dr. Yi Hongsik, 1969.
The concept of *Mokja wiwang* (木子爲王), or prophecy that someone with the family name of Yi would become king, was in fact closely intertwined with the entry found in the `<Jewang un’gi` (帝王韻紀, Songs of Emperors and Kings) which claims that the son of Tansusin (檀樹神) would become a king. This can be viewed as the basis of the traditional perception of Kojisŏn. Pak Kwangyong, “Historical changes in the perception of Tan’gu” : With a special focus on the Chosŏn dynasty (Tan’gun insikŭi yŏksajŏk pyŏnch’ŏn –chosŏn sidae-)”, *Materials Related to the Perception of Tan’gu* (Tan’gu - kŭ ıhaewa charyo), 1994.

While in 1412, Tan’gun was, at the request of the Ministry of Rites (*yejo*), enshrined alongside Kija, the decision was made to establish a separate shrine for Tan’gun in 1425. This shrine was erected in 1429, or during the 11th year of King Sejong’s reign, just south of Kija’s grave in Pyŏngyang, with Tan’gun enshrined alongside King Tongmyŏng. Han Yŏngwu, “The perception of Kija during Koryŏ and the early Chosŏn dynasty (Koryŏ-chosŏn chŏn’giŭi kija insik)”, *Korean Culture*, Vol. 3, 1982.

Here one finds references to a Tan’gunsa Temple in Pyŏngyang, Samsŏngsa Temple in Mt. Kuwol, a Ch’amsŏngdan in Mt. Mani situated on Kanghwa Island and a Samrangsŏn.

North Korea recently claimed to have found the tomb of Tan’gun, which was referred to in this particular work as ‘Ŏnjŏn’, and was said to have been situated west of Kangdonghyŏn.

Here, the fable of Ungnyŏ was omitted, with the story simplified to read that Tan’gun descended directly from Heaven.

Han Yŏngwu, *The Early History of Chosŏn* (Chosŏn chŏn’gi sahaksya yŏn’gu), 1981.

This represents the first reference to Tan’gun’s son Puru’s participation in the *Tosan hwejip*. Some scholars have argued that this work should be viewed as a new secondary historical source (Han Yŏngwu, *The Early History of Chosŏn*, 1981, p.56); meanwhile, others have claimed that it was actually a revision of a previous work (Choi Pyŏnghŏn, “Analysis of historical documents related to the Tan’gun myth compiled during the Koryŏ dynasty (Koryŏ sidae tan’gun sinhwa chŏnsŭng munhŏnŭi kŏmt’o)”, *Materials Related to the Perception of Tan’gu*, 1994.

Hong Yŏha, *Tongguk t’onggam chegang* (東國通鑑提綱).
Hong’s work weakened the importance of Tan’gun Chosŏn and introduced a new legitimacy theory based on the link between Kija-Mahan-Silla, which he called the *Mahan chŏngt’ongron*.

10 Hŏ Mok, *Tongsa* (東事); in his work, Hŏ described Tan’gun Chosŏn as being the direct forbearer of Chosŏn. Hŏ’s work also introduced notions of Taoism and indigenous folk beliefs as part of its efforts to promote the perception of an independent nation. His views are perceived as having greatly influenced the work of modern nationalist historians, Pak Kwangyong, Ibid, 1994, p.166.

11 Hong Manjong, *Tonggukryŏk taechongmok* (東國歷代摠目), Hong made several references to Tan’gun which were found in the *Haedong yijŏk* (海東異蹟).


13 Pak Kwangyong, Ibid.


20 Harada Yoshito, Lo-Lang: The Tomb of Ogwanyŏn wangwu(樂浪五官椽王旴 墳墓), Tokyo Imperial University, 1930.
25 Sin Ch’aeho, History of Chosŏn(Chosŏn sanggosa), 1984; Collection of Tanje Sin Ch’aeho’s Works(Tanje Sin Ch’aeho chŏnjip)”, I, 1972.
26 Chŏng Inbo, History of Chosŏn(Chosŏnsa yŏn’gu), 1946.
27 Studies on North Korean research on Kojosŏn and Tan’gun include; Yi Kیدong, “Studies on Kojosŏn conducted in North Korea(Pukhanesŏu kojosŏn yŏn’gu)”, Public lectures on Korean history(Han’guksa simin kangjwa), February, 1988; Yi Kwangrin, “Studies on Kojosŏn conducted by North Korean scholars(Pukhan hakkyeesŏu kojosŏn yŏn’gu)”, Yŏksa hakbo, 124, 1989; Kim Chŏngbae, Our history as viewed by North Korea(Bukhani pon Uri yŏksa), Eŭlyu Publishing Co., 1990; Kwŏn Oyŏng, “Trends in the research on Kojosŏn and their characteristics(Kojosŏnsa yŏn’gu’i tonghyanggwa kŭ naeyong)”, North Korean Research on Ancient History(Pukhanŭi kodaesa yŏn’gu’), December,1990; Cho Pŏpchong, “Investigation of the North Korean perception of Kojosŏn history(Pukhanŭi kojosŏnsa insik ch’egyee taehan koch’al)”, North Korean Perceptions of our Ancient History(Pukhanŭi uri
Main Points of Contention in Terms of the Studies on Tan’gun and Kojosŏn


29 This term was first suggested by professor Kim Chŏngbae in order to replace obscure terms such as ‘Misongni-type pottery’ used by Korean and Japanese scholars, and ‘Hyŏnmunho’, which is employed by Chinese scholars; both of which are perceived as not properly reflecting recently uncovered artifacts. Hoengii pugo kyŏngho is a term used to refer to a pottery jar which boasts a fat neck and distinctive handles. The period associated with the Lute-shaped bronze daggers in the Liaodong area is directly related to the emergence of these Hoengii pugo kyŏngho on which three-line patterns(Hyŏnmun) were inscribed. Kim Chŏngbae, ibid, p.43, 1999.

30 Song Hojŏng, Kojosŏn in Korean ancient history(Han’guk kodaesasokŭi kojosŏnsa), P’urŭn yŏksa, 2003.


33 Cho Pŏpchong, “The religious and cultural characteristics of the perception of Tan’gun within Koguryŏ society(Koguryŏ sahoeŭi tan’gun insikkwa chonggyo munhwajŏk t’ŭkching)”, Journal of ancient Korean History
(Han’guk kodaesa yŏn’gu), Vol. 21, 2001.


35 Shuijingzhu(水經注), P’aesu.

36 Shihchi(史記 Historical Records), Chosŏnjŏn.

37 Kuodizhi(正義).

38 T’ongdian(通典).

39 Samguk yusa, Book 1, I. Wonder, Kojosŏn Ilyŏn regarded Asadal as having been in Kaesŏng, while Mt. T’aebaek was in fact Mt. Myohyang. He also argued that the P’yŏngyangsŏng, which was the capital city established by Tan’gun, was the Sŏgyŏng situated in present-day P’yŏngyang.

40 Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam, Vol. 51.

41 Cho Pŏpchong, “Japanese scholars’ perception of the Chinese Commanderies (P’yŏngyang regional culture)(Commanderies munje(P’yŏngyang chiyŏk munhwae) e taehan ilbon yŏksa hakkyeŭi insik kŏmt’o)”, Collection of Essays to Commemorate the 60th Birthday of Song Kapho, 1992.

42 The North Korean Academy of Social Sciences first reported that it had discovered ‘Tan’gun’s tomb’ in Mt. Taebak, Kangdong County on October 2nd, 1993. During a seminar on Tan’gun and Kojosŏn held on October 12th of that same year, it confirmed that this was in fact Tan’gun’s tomb.


43 Social Science Publishers., Introduction to the History of Kojosŏn(Kojosŏn yŏksa kaegwan), 1999.


45 Jijie(集解).

46 Souyin(索隱).

47 Han Yŏngwu, The Study of History during the Latter Period of Chosŏn
Main Points of Contention in Terms of the Studies on Tan’gun and Kojosŏn

(Chosŏn hugi sahaksya yŏn’gu), Ilchisa, 1989.

48 Sŏ Yŏngsu, ibid, 1988, pp.28-32.
50 Yun Naehyon, Study of Kojosŏn(Kojosŏn yŏng’gu), Ilchisa, 1995.
56 Ch’oe Namsŏn, “Study of Tan’gun”, Korea and the Korean Nation (Chosŏngup Chosŏn mionjok), 1927.
57 Sin Ch’aeho, Ancient Korean History(Chosŏn sanggosa), 1931; Compilation of Tanjae Sin Ch’aeho’s Essays(Tanjae Sin Ch’aeho chŏnjip), Vol. I, 1972.
58 Kim Chaewŏn, New Analysis of the Tan’gun Myth(Tan’gun sinhwaŭi sinyŏng’gu), 1947, Chŏngŭmsa.
59 Yi Pyŏngdo, Ancient Korean History(Han’guksa kodaesa yŏng’gu), 1976, Pakyŏngsa.
60 Kim Chŏnghak, “The Tan’gun myth and Totemism(Tan’gun sŏlhwawa totemism), Yŏksa hakbo, Vol. 7; Study of Ancient Korean History(Han’guksanggosa yŏng’gu), 1990, Pŏmwusa.
61 Yi Kibaik, “Issues related to Kojosŏn(Kojosŏnŭi chemunje)”, Han’guk
kodaesaron, T’angudang.


64 Kim Chŏngbae, “The ethnic makeup and cultural integration of the people of Kojosŏn(Kojosŏnu chumin kusŏnggwa munhwajŏk pokhap)”, *The Origins of Korean National Culture(Han’guk minjok munhwaiŭ kiwŏn)*, Publishing Department of Korea University.

65 Kang Yongnam, “Koguryŏ people’s perception and worship of Tan’gun (Tan’gune Taehan Koguryŏ saramdŭlŭŭ ihaewa sungbae)”, *History and Science(Yŏksa kwahak)*, 96-3.

66 Cho Pŏpchong, “The religious and cultural characteristics of the perception of Tan’gun within Koguryŏ society(Koguryŏ sahoeŭi tan’gun insikkwa chonggyo munhwajŏk t’ŭkching)”, *Journal of Ancient Korean History(Han’guk kodaesa yŏn’gu)*, Vol. 21, 2001.


단군·고조선연구사 및 쟁점 검토

조 법종(우석대학교)

고조선(古朝鮮)은 한국사의 첫 국가로서 한국사의 인식계에서는 ‘단군(檀君)’, ‘기자(箕子)’, ‘위만(衛滿)’ 등 3개의 성격을 달리하는 존재와 연결된 정치체가 계기적으로 고조선으로 통칭되는 역사를 구성하여 나타나고 있다. 이는 고조선의 역사를 전하는 건국신화인 단군신화를 중심으로 한 《삼국유사》, 《제왕운기》 등 기록과 국가적 성 장이후 중국과의 관계가 중심이 된 《삼국지》가 인용한 《위략》 기록 등에 차별적으로 나타나고 있다. 이같은 고조선과 관련된 고고학적 문화양상은 비파형동검(琵琶形銅劍) 및 지석묘(支石墓)와 石棺墓로 대표되는 靑銅器文化를 필두로 철기문 화단계까지 연결되고 있다. 이같은 문화는 中國系 靑銅器文化와는 구별되는 遼東半島, 東北滿洲 및 韓半島에 분포하였다. 특히 중국과는 春秋·戰國時代 및 秦·漢교체기에 朝鮮이란 존재로 다양한 정치세력과 조우하였다. 또한 衛滿朝鮮시대를 전후하여 匈奴로 대표되는 騎馬遊牧勢力과의 교류도 있었다. 이같이 고조선은 이들과의 정치, 군사, 경제적 교류 속에서 다양한 형태의 경험을 축적하였으며 정치적 성숙과정을 통해 중심지와 영역의 변화도 수반되었다. 고조선문제에 있어 가장 많은 논란과 쟁점이 무각된 문제는 中心地문제였다. 이는 고조선의 중심지가 한반도 특히, 平壤이 고조선의 중심지였다는 平壤中心説과 遼東地域 遼河 또는 大凌河를 중심한 지역이 고조선의 중심지로서 존재하였다는 遼東中心説로 그리고 요동지역에서 대동강지역으로 이동하 였다는 이동설로 나뉘어 논쟁이 지속되고 있다. 이에 따른 패수, 왕검성 위치 등의 역사지리논쟁이 고조선문제에서 여전히 남아있다.

한편, 고조선은 위만조선단계에서 漢과의 대결구도속에 전쟁을 통해 정치적 붕괴 와 한 군현체계에 의한 통제를 경험하였다. 그러나 이는 곧 고희려 등에 의해 축출 되고 친중국적 도착세력과 연결된 낙망으로 명맥이 유지되고 고조선은 후대 역사체 에 의해 계승되었다.
주제어: 고조선, 단군, 기자, 위만, <제왕운기>, 왕검성, 한군현, 고조선 중심지논쟁, 진장성, 패수, 고구려, 협독현, <응제시주>, 한국, 예국, 왜국, 규원사화, 환단고기, 단기고사, 주몽, 발해, 삼국유사