

## BOOK REVIEWS

***THE KOREAN HISTORY TEXTBOOK FOR ALL*** by Korean History Textbook Compilation Committee. Seoul: Hangram Institute of Korean History and Culture Publishing House, 2024. Vol. 1, pp. 536 and Vol. 2, pp.464. 35,000 KRW (Vol. 1) and 32,000 KRW (Vol. 2). 『온국민을 위한 대한민국 역사 교과서』 [대한민국 역사 교과서 편찬위원회] [도서출판 한가람역사문화연구소]

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### INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

The book, *The Korean History Textbook for All*, consists of two volumes, and in this review, I will focus on the first volume, which covers the history of Korea from the Paleolithic era to the Goryeo Dynasty.

To understand the purpose behind this publication, it is important to note that this textbook adopts a free publication system similar to those in many OECD countries. Under this system, historians and scholars compile history textbooks without state censorship, allowing schools to freely select from the available publications.

This particular textbook was published by the Hangaram Institute of History and Culture [한가람역사문화연구소]. As of October 2024, the authors believe that current history textbooks in South Korea

present historical perspectives that are fundamentally flawed in two major ways. First, they are influenced by the Sinocentric view of the Noron faction [노론 老論] from the late Joseon Dynasty. Second, they reflect the Colonial Historiography promoted by the Japanese Government General of Korea [JGGK, 조선총독부] during the occupation, which emphasized the Imperial Historiography of the Japanese Empire.

In 1895, the editorial department of the Ministry of Education of the Joseon Dynasty produced the first national history textbooks for elementary schools, *Joseon History* 『조선역사 朝鮮歷史』 and *Abridged History of the Joseon Dynasty* 『조선역대사략 朝鮮歷代史略』, which clearly established Dangun's [단군 檀君] founding of Gojoseon as the starting point of Korean history. Following Japan's annexation of the

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Korean Empire in 1910, the Japanese established the Korean Peninsula History Compilation Committee [KPHCC, 조선반도사편찬위원회] under the Central Council of the JGGK to create works such as *Korean Peninsula History* 『조선반도사 朝鮮半島史』 and the *Elementary School National History Textbook by Japanese Government General of Korea* [조선총독부 편찬 심상소학 국사 편찬교재]. These books were not produced for purely academic purposes but for political reasons, promoting the colonial historiography of Imperial Japan. They deliberately excluded Manchuria and China from the narrative of Korean history, limiting their focus to the Korean Peninsula.

Furthermore, this colonial historiography divided the Korean Peninsula into “Northern Joseon” and “Southern Joseon.” In the north, they claimed the existence of Gija Joseon [기자 조선 箕子朝鮮], Wiman Joseon [위만 조선 衛滿朝鮮], and the Four Han Commanderies [한사군 漢四郡], while intentionally erasing Dangun Joseon [단군조선 檀君 朝鮮]. In the south, they acknowledged the existence of the Three Han Countries [삼한 三韓], but distorted the history by claiming that Empress Jingu of Japan’s Yamato Kingdom conquered Gaya [가야 伽倻] and established the Japanese Government of Imna [임나일본부 任那日本府] in Southern Korea.

Even after Korea’s liberation from Japanese rule following Japan’s defeat in 1945, individuals from the Joseon History Compilation Committee, the successor to the KPHCC, continued to dominate the

field of Korean historical scholarship. They played a key role in shaping the framework of Korean history and the compilation of history textbooks, stubbornly adhering to colonial historiography as the only accepted narrative. This has led to numerous issues in the study of Korean history.

The period from 1910 to 1945, during which Korea fought against Japanese occupation, was not only a territorial war to reclaim the homeland but also a war over historical identity. However, even today, in educational settings, history textbooks continue to reflect the imperial historiography of Japan, perpetuating the same colonial perspectives. An even more concerning issue is that this historical perspective is being distorted and exploited by China’s Northeast Project [동북공정 東北工程], resulting in the misrepresentation of ancient Korean history.

Against this backdrop, this book, *The Korean History Textbook for All*, was published in April 2024 to address and overcome the contradictions present in previous historical narratives. Specifically, it is a textbook compiled based on primary sources—those closest to historical events—and it challenges readers to critically evaluate differing perspectives when discrepancies arise between the facts presented in this book and those in existing textbooks. By doing so, the book avoids the biases of colonial historiography and instead presents a history that reflects the reality of the Republic of Korea. In this review, focus will be placed on summarizing and discussing how the

textbook describes the lineage and territorial issues and cultural codes in Korean history and the cultural codes.

According to the book, the territorial extent of Korean history encompasses regions where the ancestors of the Korean people, the Dongyi [동이 東夷] tribe, lived, including the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, Hebei Province [하북성 河北省], the Bohai Sea [발해 渤海] coast, Shandong [산둥 山東] Peninsula, the inland regions of the Shandong Peninsula, Inner Mongolia, Henan Province [하남성 河南省], and Jiangsu Province [강소성 江蘇省].

The historical lineage of Korea, as presented in this book, begins with the Paleolithic and Neolithic periods, including the **Liaohé River Civilization** [요하문명 遼河文明] and most notably the Hongshan Culture [홍산문화 紅山文化] thereof, followed by **Dangun Joseon** (that is, Gojoseon), the **Era of the Various Kingdoms** {Buyeo, Biryu, Silla, Goryeo)—Goguryeo, South Okjeo [남옥저 南沃沮], North Okjeo [북옥저 北沃沮], Ye-Maek [예맥 濊貊], Choe's Nakrang [낙랑 樂浪]}, the **Era of the Five Kingdoms** (Buyeo, Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla, Gaya), the **Three Kingdoms Period** (Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla), the **Northern and Southern Kingdoms Period** (Silla, Balhae), the **Later Three Kingdoms Period**, **Goryeo**, **Joseon**, the **Korean Empire**, and the **Republic of Korea**. The cultural codes of Korean history, as described in the book, include stone mound tombs [적석총 積石塚], pyramid-shaped stone mound tombs, dolmens, mandolin-shaped

bronze dagger, birds, the sun, gold, and horses.

## SUMMARY OF BOOK CHAPTERS

The textbook introduces numerous novel historical facts and interpretations that have largely remained unknown to the public. Accordingly, this section provides a detailed summary of the main historical narratives that it presents for each period of Korean history.

### CHAPTER 1. PALEOLITHIC PERIOD

The Dongyi tribe inhabited regions including the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, the Bohai Sea coast, the Shandong Peninsula, and the inland areas of the Shandong Peninsula. The Paleolithic era in the Korean Peninsula began approximately one million years ago. The similarities in the manufacturing techniques found in Paleolithic sites across Manchuria, the Bohai Sea coast, the Beijing region, and the Korean Peninsula suggest that these areas belonged to the same human and cultural sphere.

### CHAPTER 2. NEOLITHIC PERIOD (LIAOHE RIVER CIVILIZATION)

The Neolithic period began around 13,000 years ago, following the end of the Ice Age.

Figure 1. The Liaohe River Dongyi Civilization Area



The Neolithic people who lived in regions such as the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, and the Shandong Peninsula during this time are considered the direct ancestors of the Korean people. A representative artifact from this era is the comb-pattern pottery [빗살무늬 토기]. In 2001, the world's oldest known rice grains, dated between 12,500 and 14,800 years ago, were discovered in Soro-ri, Oksan-myeon, Cheongwon-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do, Korea.

The formation of the Korean people is supported by the fact that the comb-pattern pottery found on the Korean Peninsula and the Bohai Sea coast predates similar pottery found in Siberia, reinforcing the theory of the indigenous origins of the Korean people. The indigenous theory, centered around the Dongyi tribe, presents two main streams: one involves the Liaohe River Civilization, encompassing the

Bohai Sea coast, Manchuria, and the Korean Peninsula; and the other involves Neolithic peoples from Shandong Province, Henan Province, and Jiangsu Province as the roots of the Korean people. Since both perspectives place the Dongyi tribe at the center, further research on the Dongyi people is necessary.

The Liaohe River Civilization is the Neolithic culture of the Dongyi tribe, with the Hongshan Culture at its core. As shown in Figure 1, this culture was widely distributed across regions including Inner Mongolia, eastern Hebei Province, Liaoning Province, and the Korean Peninsula. The earliest and most advanced culture in this area is the Xiaohexi Culture [소하서문화 小河西文化], located near Chifeng [적봉 赤峰] in Inner Mongolia, which was formed between 7000 and 6500 BCE. This was followed by the Xinglongwa Culture [흥릉와문화 興隆洼文化], which established

collective settlements, and later developed into the Zhaobaogou Culture [조보구문화 趙寶溝文化] from 5000 to 4400 BCE, eventually culminating in the Hongshan Culture.

The Hongshan culture is distributed across areas north of the Great Wall, including eastern Hebei Province, central and southern Inner Mongolia, northern Hebei Province, and western Liaoning [요녕성 遼寧] Province, with over 1,000 sites discovered to date. It represents a Neolithic culture that is linked to Korean history, primarily through its stone mound tombs and comb-pattern pottery, although bronze artifacts have also been found. Notably, the site at Niuheliang in Liaoning Province, which dates from 3500 to 3000 BCE, includes a temple dedicated to a goddess, along with altars, stone mound tombs, and pyramid-shaped tombs.

The stone mound tombs and pyramid-shaped tombs suggest a connection to the origins of tomb styles later found in Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla. Numerous bird-shaped jade artifacts have been unearthed from these tombs, leading Chinese scholars to identify this culture as belonging to the Zoyi [조이 鳥夷] people, a branch of the Dongyi tribe that worshiped the sun and birds. The only known country from this period in East Asian historical records is "Shinshi" [신시 神市], which was created by the Hwanung [환웅 桓雄] tribe, as described in the *Samguk Yusa, The Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea* [삼국유사 三國遺事]. This suggests a possible link

between the Hongshan culture and Shinshi in the history of Korea.

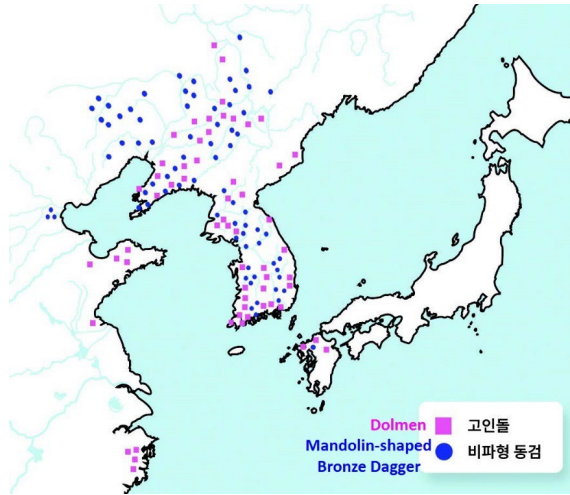
Following the Hongshan culture is the Xiaoheyang Culture [소하연문화 小河沿文化], located in Aohanqi [오한기 敖漢旗], Inner Mongolia. Subsequently, the Early Bronze Age Xiajiadian Lower Layer Culture [하가점하층문화 夏家店下層文化] emerged between 2300 and 1600 BCE in Chifeng, Inner Mongolia. This culture shows a deep connection to the early territorial extent of Gojoseon [고조선 古朝鮮, also romanized as Old Chosun], which was founded in 2333 BCE. Notably, 64 stone fortress sites have been discovered, including some with “chi [치 雉]”—outwardly protruding defensive walls. This method of constructing fortifications with protruding defenses is considered the origin of techniques later seen in the fortifications of Goguryeo, Goryeo, and Joseon in Korea.

Following this, the Xiajiadian Upper Layer Culture [하가점하층문화 夏家店上層文化] developed between 1000 and 300 BCE, with the discovery of bronze daggers resembling the mandolin-shaped bronze dagger of Gojoseon. These findings suggest a connection to the later territorial expansion of Gojoseon and offer historical evidence linking this culture to the later stages of Gojoseon’s development.

### CHAPTER 3. THE GOJOSEON (DANGUN JOSEON) PERIOD

Gojoseon was founded by Dangun Wanggeom [왕검 王儉] in 2333 BCE during the Bronze Age, with its capital at

**Figure 2.** The Distribution of Mandolin-Shaped Bronze Daggers and Dolmens



Pyeongyang Fortress [평양성 平壤城]. The people of Gojoseon regarded themselves as the “Heavenly Descendant People,” believing that their origins were from heaven. The founding philosophy of Gojoseon is “Hongik Ingan” [홍익인간 弘益人間], meaning “to broadly benefit humankind,” and its governing principle, “Jaese Ihwa” [재세이화 在世理化], emphasizes the transformation of the world through reason rather than through force or law.

The key artifacts representing Gojoseon include the Mandolin-shaped bronze dagger (or, Gojoseon-style bronze dagger) and dolmens (Figure 2). Additionally, the Misongri-type pottery [미송리식 토기], excavated from both the Korean Peninsula and the Liaodong Peninsula, is often considered a representative artifact of this period. Notable Bronze Age archaeological sites on the Korean Peninsula include the residential ruins in Jangcheon-ri, Yeongam-gun, Jeollanam-do, and the

dolmen site in Yangsuri, Yangpyeong-gun, both of which date to around the 25th century BCE.

In Chinese records, Gojoseon was sometimes referred to as “Han” [한 韓]. It is said to have consisted of over 70 feudal states, with prominent examples including Buyeo [부여], Biryu [비류], Silla [신라], Goryeo (Goguryeo), South Okjeo [남옥저], North Okjeo [북옥저], and Ye-Maek [예맥]. These feudal states were known as Geosuguk [거수국 渠帥國], and their descendants later formed the kingdoms of Buyeo, Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla. The rulers of these later kingdoms were believed to be descendants of Dangun.

The people of Gojoseon began migrating to Japan during the Jomon [조문 縄文] period, and similarities have been observed between the cultures, particularly in artifacts such as Earthenware Bowl with Raised Pattern [용기문토기 隆起紋土器] and Jar Burials [옹관묘 甕棺墓]. The Yayoi [야요이 弥生] culture, which spanned from around 300 BCE to 300 CE, is believed to have developed more from the influence of Gojoseon than from a connection to Jomon culture. Key elements of Gojoseon's culture—such as rice cultivation, earthenware, and burial practices—were transmitted to Japan during this period. For instance, Korean rice seeds, dolmens, slender bronze daggers [세형동검 甕棺墓], and multi-knobbed geometric pattern bronze mirrors have been discovered across the Japanese archipelago, particularly in the Kyushu region.

Around the 12th century BCE, when the Shang [상 商] Dynasty was overthrown



**Figure 3.** Reconstructed Map of the Yan State's Territory and Liaodong around the 4th Century BCE



by the Zhou [주 周] Dynasty, Gija [기자 箕子], a member of the Shang royal family, is said to have fled to Gojoseon (Dangun Joseon). Chinese scholars believe that Gija founded Gija Joseon in present-day Lulong County [노룡현 盧龍縣], Hebei Province.

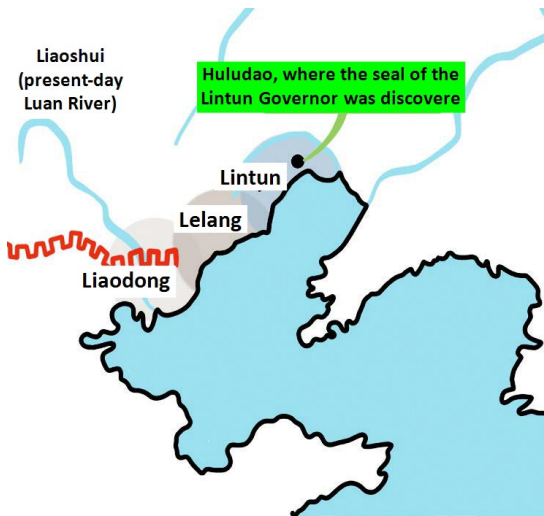
The border between Gojoseon and China was established near present-day Mt. Galseok [갈석산 碣石山] after General Qin Kai [진개 秦開] of the Yan [연 燕] state seized 2,000 *li* [리 里]—831.6 km—of Gojoseon's western territory. After the Han [한 漢] Dynasty was founded in China, Wiman [위만 衛滿], a man from the Yan state, crossed the Paesu [Peishui in Chinese, 패수 溟水] River to the east and sought refuge with King Jun [준 準] of Gija Joseon, eventually being entrusted with the defense of the western frontier. According to the *Shuijing*, *The Waterways Classic* [수경 水經], the Paesu River, which formed the border between Gija Joseon and the Han dynasty,

flows eastward into the sea. However, the rivers in the northwestern Korean Peninsula all flow westward into the sea, suggesting that the Paesu River should be identified somewhere in present-day Hebei or Liaoning Province.

Wiman subsequently expanded his influence with refugees from the Qi [제 齊] and Yan states of China, eventually overthrowing King Jun and establishing Wiman Joseon [위만조선 衛滿朝鮮], with Wanggeom Fortress [왕검성 王儉城] as its capital. King Jun fled across the sea to Han [Korean Han, 한 韓] in Korean peninsula, where he became the King of Han. Both Gija Joseon and Wiman Joseon occupied the western territories of Dangun Joseon.

Around 109 BCE, Emperor Wu of Han [한무제 漢武帝] launched an invasion of Wiman Joseon. Wiman Joseon fell in 108 BCE due to internal strife, when its capital,

**Figure 4.** The Great Wall and Lelang Commandery



Wanggeom Fortress, was captured. Following the conquest, Emperor Wu established the Four Han Commanderies [한사군 漢四郡] in the region.

During the late Joseon period, some Sinocentric Confucian scholars, as well as Japanese colonialist scholars during the Japanese occupation of Korea, claimed that the capital of Wiman Joseon was in present-day Pyongyang, thus arguing that the Four Han Commanderies were located in northern Korean peninsula.

However, most of the officials who surrendered from Wiman Joseon were enfeoffed as lords in the Shandong region, the former territory of the state of Qi. According to 6th-7th century annotations in the *Hou Han Shu, Book of the Later Han* [후한서 後漢書], Lelang Commandery [낙랑군 樂浪郡], one of the Four Han Commanderies, was described as being in the territory of the ancient state of Joseon, located in Liaodong. While modern Liaodong

corresponds to the area east of the Liaohe River in Liaoning Province, ancient Liaodong was situated near the ancient city of Wuzhong [무중 無終], which is now identified as Yutian County, north of present-day Tianjin. In 1997, a seal inscribed with “Governor of Lintun Commandery [임둔군 臨屯郡]” was discovered at Taijitudun [태집둔 郟集屯] in the Yanshan District of Jinxi City, western Liaoning Province, providing evidence that Lintun Commandery, one of the Four Han Commanderies, was located there. Thus, it can be inferred that the Four Han Commanderies, and by extension Wiman Joseon, were situated in regions close to present-day western Liaoning, Hebei, and near the Shandong area.

Artifacts such as Mandolin-shaped bronze daggers, dolmens, and Mingdao coins [명도전 明刀錢] are characteristic of Gojoseon. In Songshan District, Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia—within the territory of Gojoseon—Bronze Age artifacts dating back to around 2400 BCE have been found in the Lower Xiajiadian culture, predating the bronze artifacts found in the Yellow River basin by approximately 200 years. Iron usage began around the 8th century BCE and became widespread by the 5th century BCE.

#### CHAPTER 4. THE ERA OF VARIOUS KINGDOMS

During the Dangun Joseon period, there were Geosu-guk [feudal states governed by lords 거수국 渠帥國] including Buyeo, Goguryeo, East Okjeo, Eumnu [읍루 挾婁],



Ye, the Three Han [삼한 三韓], Wae [Wa in Japanese, 왜 倭], and Choe's Nakrang State [최씨 낙랑국 崔氏 樂浪國]. As the central authority of Dangun Joseon weakened and Wiman Joseon collapsed around the 2nd century BCE, these Geosu-guk began to operate as independent states, marking the beginning of the Era of the Various Kingdoms.

The territorial extents of these states varied, with Buyeo and Goguryeo each covering approximately 2,000 *li* in all directions, East Okjeo spanning 1,000 *li*, and the Three Han occupying a region of about 4,000 *li* in all directions.

Buyeo was established by the Ye-Maek or Maek people and shared cultural traits with the Shang Dynasty, as both were considered part of the Dongyi tribe. They also shared a myth of birth from an egg and celebrated the same lunar New Year. The territory of Buyeo extended approximately 2,000 *li* in all directions, and it is believed to have been located north of Mt. Jieshi, along the upper reaches of the Luan River [난하 灤河]. In February 494 CE, Buyeo surrendered to Goguryeo.

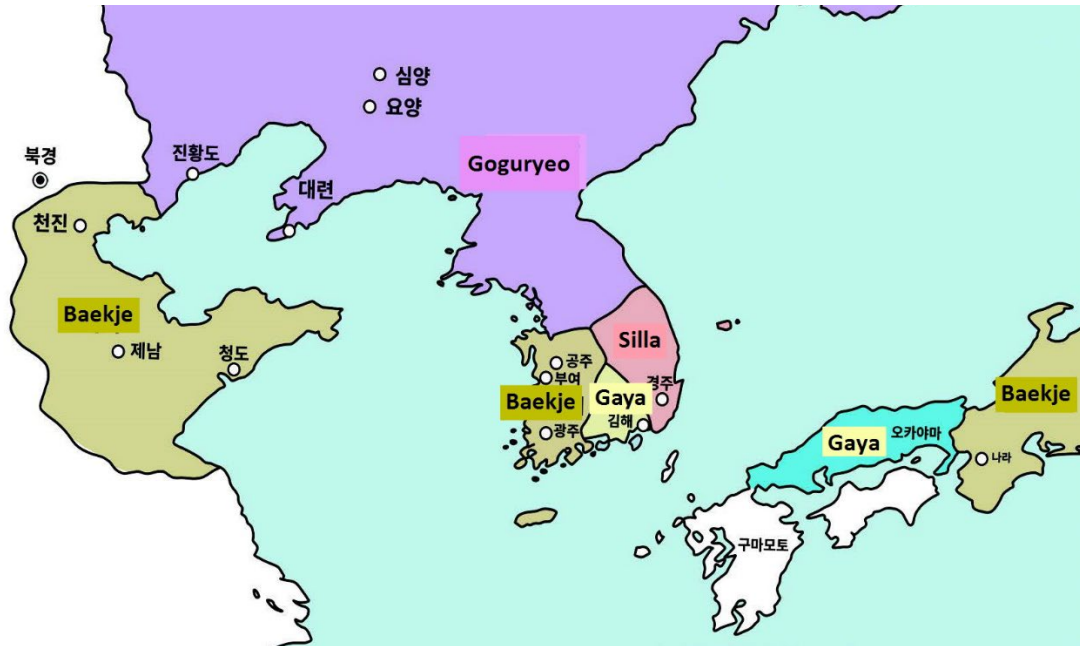
The Three Han occupied a territory of about 4,000 *li* in all directions and were composed of Mahan [마한 馬韓], Jinhan [진한 辰韓], and Byunhan [변한 弁韓]. According to the accounts of Choe Chiwon [최치원] of Silla and historians of the Goryeo period, Mahan became Goguryeo, Jinhan became Baekje, and Byunhan became Silla. Mahan was eventually conquered by Baekje in 9 CE. However, in 121 CE, Goguryeo, along with Mahan and Ye-Maek cavalry, attacked Xuantu Commandery [현도군

玄菟郡] and Liaodong. This suggests that Mahan, as a vassal state of Goguryeo, may have existed in regions such as Shandong, Henan, and Hebei Provinces.

Goguryeo was founded in 37 BCE by Jumong [주몽], who arrived from East Buyeo [동부여] to Jolbon Buyeo [졸본부여] and established the kingdom with the help of Princess Soseono [소서노]. Jumong was regarded as the legitimate founder, though the Goguryeo kingdom had existed as early as 200 years prior. Jumong was a son of Hemosoo of North Buyeo (북부여), who was, in turn, a son of Dangun. Goguryeo was composed of five clans: Sonobu [소노부], Yonnobu [연노부], Jeolnobu [절노부], Soonnobu [순노부], Gwannobu [관노부], and Gyerubu [계루부]. Initially, kings were selected from the Yonnobu clan, but later, the royal lineage shifted to the Gyerubu clan. The capital city of Goguryeo founded by Jumong was located between present-day Liaoyang, Liaoning Province, and Beijing.

Goguryeo had three capitals throughout its history: Pyeongyang-seong [or, Pyeongyang Fortress [평양성 平壤城], Gungnae-seong [국내성 國內城], and Hanseong [한성 漢城]. Stone inscriptions found in present-day Pyeongyang refer to the city as Hanseong. The kingdom's national policy was Damul [다물], a policy of regaining lost territories, which led to continuous conflicts with the Later Han Dynasty. In the 4th century, Goguryeo contested with the Xianbei [선비 鮮卑] for dominance over ancient Liaodong. The languages of the Xianbei and Goguryeo were mutually intelligible.

Figure 5. Territories of East Asia in the Late 5th Century



In the 5th century, Gwanggaeto the Great [광개태왕 廣開土大王] achieved military success over Baekje and the Xianbei, gaining control over Hebei Province and parts of Inner Mongolia, as well as asserting dominance over vassal states such as East Buyeo, Sushen [숙신 肅慎], and the Khitan [거란 契丹]. King Jangsu [장수왕 長壽王] later moved the capital to Pyeongyang, which is believed to have been located either in Lulong County, Hebei Province, or at Dongjing Liaoyang Prefecture of the Liao [요 遼] Dynasty, which corresponds to present-day Liaoyang, Liaoning Province.

Goguryeo ultimately fell in 668 CE, succumbing to a coalition invasion by Silla and the Tang [唐] Dynasty, which exploited divisions within the Goguryeo ruling class. The defeat marked the end of a historical

perspective that viewed the kingdom as a nation of heavenly descendants.

Baekje was founded in 18 BCE by Soseono and her son Onjo [온조 溫祚], who came from Jolbon Buyeo and established the kingdom at Wirye-seong [위례성 慰禮城]. Baekje grew into a vast empire that extended across the Korean Peninsula, the Bohai and Shandong coasts, the Wu [오 吳] and Yue [월 越] regions, and the Japanese archipelago. The kings of Baekje resided in both eastern and western capitals, with the western capital believed to have been in the ancient Liaoxi [요서 遼西] region.

Baekje expanded its influence to Japan, where it continued to shape the Kofun Period [고분시대 古墳時代 Tumulus period], and by the 5th century, Baekje-affiliated burial mounds were dominant in the Kyushu region. However, in 660 CE, Baekje was

defeated by the allied forces of Silla and the Tang Dynasty, and it ultimately fell in 663 CE. Following the fall of Baekje, members of its ruling class migrated to Japan, where, in 670 CE, the name of the country was officially changed from Wa to Japan. In 720 CE, Japan compiled the *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicles of Japan), which began to distort the historical relationship between Baekje and Wa, elevating Wa as the suzerain state and initiating a revisionist narrative.

Silla [신라 新羅] was founded in 57 BCE and surrendered to Taejo of Goryeo [고려 태조 高麗 太祖] in 935 CE. The kingdom occupied regions near Mt. Jieshi, which was within the territory of Lelang Commandery, as well as areas in East Okjeo and modern-day Gyeongsang Province [경상도]. Silla's cultural symbols included gold, the sun, horses, and birds (roosters).

Silla allied with the Tang Dynasty to conquer Goguryeo and Baekje, and they reached an agreement that allowed Silla to claim territories south of Pyeongyang and the lands of Baekje. The Silla-Tang alliance succeeded in defeating Baekje in 663 CE and Goguryeo in 668 CE. However, after the conquests, the Tang Dynasty violated their agreement by establishing the Andong Protectorate [안동도호부 安東都護府] and the Ungjin Commandery [웅진도독부 熊津都督府] over the former territories of Goguryeo and Baekje, respectively. In response, Silla, along with the remaining forces of Goguryeo and Baekje, began a war against the Tang in 670 CE, ultimately achieving victory in

676 CE. Following this, the border between Silla and the Tang Dynasty was established near Lulong County, Hebei Province. Silla promoted Confucianism and sent many students to study in Tang China, although this also marked the beginning of the Sinocentric view in Korea.

Gaya [가야 伽倻], also known as Gara or Garak, was founded in 42 CE as a confederation of six Gaya states, with Daegaya (Geumgwan Gaya) at its center, and was eventually annexed by Silla in 562 CE. From the late 3rd century, Gaya expanded its influence into Japan, marking the beginning of the Kofun Period. By the 4th century, Gaya-style burial mounds were predominant in the Kyushu region, and such mounds were also found scattered across Tsushima, Kyushu, and Nara.

The name, Naklang [낙랑 樂浪], was associated with the Han [漢] Commandery of Lelang [樂浪郡], established in Hebei Province following the fall of Wiman Joseon, and Choe's Naklang State [낙랑국 樂浪國]. The Naklang State was founded in Pyeongyang by refugees from Wiman Joseon but was eventually destroyed by King Daemosin [대무신 大武神] of Goguryeo in 52 CE.

During the Japanese colonial period, scholars such as Tadashi Sekino and Ryu Imanishi from the Japanese Government-General of Korea purchased Han [漢]-era artifacts from antique shops in Beijing and sent them to the colonial authorities, thus fabricating evidence to support the claim that the Han Commandery of Lelang was located in Pyeongyang. However, North Korean scholars, after excavating more

**Figure 6.** Map of the Western Territory of Great Silla



than 3,000 tombs around the Pyeongyang area up to the 1990s, announced that the tombs belonged only to Naklang State and not to the Han Commandery of Lelang.

Eumnu, East Okjeo, and Ye became independent states following the fall of Gojoseon. Ye was of the same ethnic group as Goguryeo, and all three—Eumnu, East Okjeo, and Ye—eventually became vassal states of Goguryeo.

The Wae people, part of the Dongyi tribe, originally lived in the Yangtze River basin around the 12th to 11th centuries BCE. During the Qin [진 秦] and Han [한 漢] periods, they settled on the islands along the coast of the Bohai Sea. They eventually migrated across the northwestern and southwestern regions of the Korean Peninsula to the Japanese archipelago. The movement of Gaya and Baekje groups to the Japanese archipelago marked the beginning of recorded Japanese history, as

these groups unified the western part of the archipelago, moving from Kyushu to Nara.

## CHAPTER 5. THE THREE KINGDOMS PERIOD

Many of the states from the Era of Many States were either unified or conquered, leading to the Five Kingdoms period (Buyeo, Goguryeo, Baekje, Silla, and Gaya) and eventually transitioning into the Three Kingdoms period (Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla).

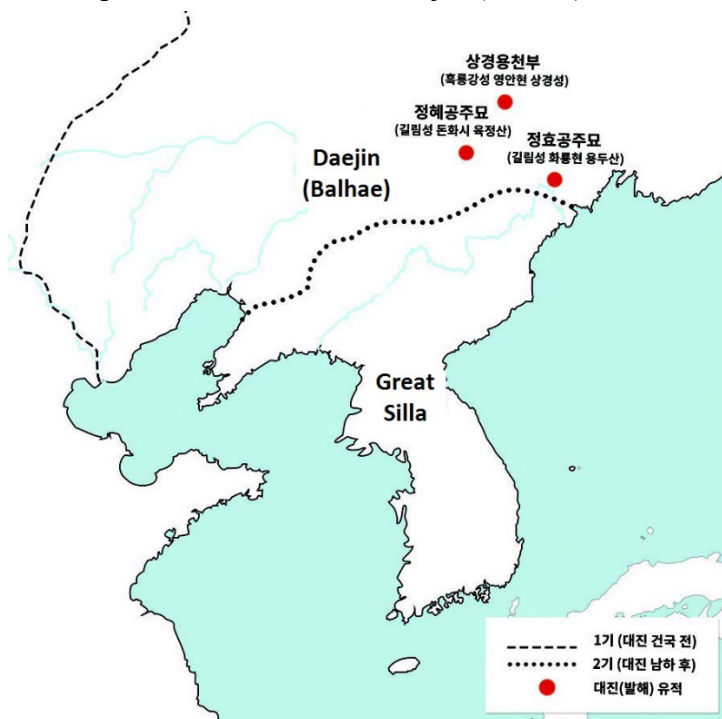
Following the fall of Goguryeo and Baekje to the alliance of Silla and the Tang Dynasty, Silla and Tang became the dominant powers in East Asia by 676 CE. However, efforts by Goguryeo's displaced people to revive their kingdom forced the Andong Protectorate to retreat to the Lulong region in Hebei Province, while Silla took control of territories the Lulong region and east of the Liao River.

In 696 CE, when the Khitan under the Youzhou Commandery [영주도독부 營州都督府] rebelled against the Tang dynasty, Dae Joyoung [대조영 大祚榮], a descendant of Goguryeo, and his father established Balhae [Daejin 大震] Kingdom in 698 CE on the former territory of the Gyerubu clan.

## CHAPTER 6. THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN STATES PERIOD

The establishment of the Daejin Kingdom (Balhae) marked the beginning of the Northern and Southern States period,

Figure 7. Estimated Map of the Territories of Daejin (Balhae) and Great Silla



with Silla in the south and Daejin in the north. The Tang Dynasty referred to the Daejin Kingdom as Balhae. The territory of Daejin spanned approximately 5,000 *li* in all directions, with the southern border defined by the Nihe River [니하 泥河], which flows through present-day Liaoyang [요양 遼陽] in Liaoning Province, separating it from Silla.

Silla organized its territory into a system of five secondary capitals: Bukwon [북원], Geumwan [금관], Seowon [서원], Namwon [남원], and Jungwon [중원], with Bukwon responsible for administering the Manchurian region.

The Daejin Kingdom maintained friendly relations with Japan, which was regarded as the successor state of Baekje.

Emperor Junin of Japan (758–764) and King Mun of Daejin sought to collaborate in a campaign against Silla, although it did not materialize. During the reign of King Seon [선왕 宣王, r. 819–830 CE], Daejin expanded its territory significantly, extending its influence southward and gaining control over parts of Silla's Manchurian territories.

In 916 CE, the Khitan established the Liao Dynasty [요 遼], which maintained friendly relations with Taebong [태봉 泰封], Goryeo, and Silla, the Three Kingdoms of the Later Period in Korea. However, in 925 CE, the Khitan attacked Daejin, leading to the fall of Daejin in 926 CE. Notably, the epitaph of Princess of State Chen (1000–1018 CE) of the Liao Dynasty records that she was a sixth-generation descendant of

the Go [고 高] clan, suggesting a connection with Goguryeo.

## CHAPTER 7. THE LATER THREE KINGDOMS PERIOD

After conquering Goguryeo and Baekje, Silla expanded its territory and population, flourishing as a powerful state in East Asia, with a thriving international trade network. However, Silla failed to implement necessary reforms, such as embracing the displaced peoples of Goguryeo and Baekje and abolishing the rigid bone-rank system [골품제 骨品制]. The kingdom faced multiple issues, including succession wars, peasant uprisings due to famines, and general unrest.

In 892 CE, Gyun Hwon [견훤 甄萱] established Later Baekje [후백제 後百濟] centered around present-day Jeonju [전주], and in 901 CE, Gung Ye [궁예 弓裔] founded Later Goguryeo [후고구려 後高句麗], with Songak [modern Gaeseong, 송악] and Manchuria as its base, initiating the period of the Later Three Kingdoms. Gung Ye later changed the name of his state to Majin [마진 摩震] in 904 CE and to Taebong in 911 CE. However, in 918 CE, he was overthrown and killed by his subordinate general Wang Gun [왕건 王建], who then ascended the throne and renamed the state Goryeo [고려 高麗].

Silla surrendered to Goryeo in 935 CE, and Later Baekje fell to Goryeo in 936 CE, marking the end of the Later Three Kingdoms period and the beginning of the Goryeo Dynasty.

## CHAPTER 8. THE GORYEO DYNASTY

Goryeo was established as a coalition of regional noble families, Hojok [호족 豪族] and was a socially open society in terms of status. After the fall of the Daejin Kingdom to the Khitan Liao Dynasty in 926, Goryeo embraced the displaced people from Daejin. While Goryeo's territory extended into Manchuria, its western borders did not reach the full extent of Goguryeo's former domain, prompting King Taejo (Wang Geon) to adopt the restoration of Goguryeo's territory as a national policy.

During Goryeo period, commerce and industry flourished, and Goryeo implemented the Bubyongje [부병제 府兵制] system, which allocated farmland to farmers while obligating them to serve in the military. This policy not only strengthened national defense but also stabilized the livelihoods of farmers. King Gwangjong referred to Gaegyeong [개경 開京] as the "Imperial Capital" and the second capital in Manchuria as the "Western Capital" [Seogyeon, 서경 西京].

Goryeo's northern territory was smaller than that of Goguryeo in the northwest but extended beyond Goguryeo's former borders in the northeast. The northwestern border was defined by the Amnok [압록 鴨綠, West Amnok] River, which, contrary to its modern location [鴨綠江, East Amnok river], corresponded to the Liaohe River [요하 遼河] in Manchuria at the time. The northeastern boundary was at Gonghomjin [공험진 公險鎭], approximately



Figure 8. The Northern Territory of Goryeo



700 *li* north of the Tuman River [두만강 豆滿江].

During this period, the international politics of East Asia was dominated by three major states: Goryeo, Liao [요 遼, Khitan], and Song [송 宋]. To prevent an alliance between Goryeo and Song, Liao began a series of invasions of Goryeo starting in 993 CE. During the third invasion, in 1019 CE, Goryeo achieved a decisive victory against Liao at the Battle of Gwiju [귀주 龜州]. This success greatly elevated Goryeo's status, establishing a balance of power among the three states in East Asia.

In 1114, the Jurchens [여진 女眞] established the Jin [금 金] Dynasty and allied with the Song to pressure and ultimately overthrow the Liao Dynasty. In 1126, they captured the Song capital, leading to the establishment of the Southern Song [남송 南宋] in Nanjing in

1127. The founder of the Jin Dynasty, Hambo [함보 函普], traced his origins to Goryeo.

In 1170, a military coup led to the establishment of a military regime in Goryeo. In 1206, the Mongols, descendants of the Xianbei [선비 鮮卑], were unified under Genghis Khan, who established the Great Mongol Empire. In 1234, the Mongols allied with the Southern Song to bring down the Jin Dynasty. The Mongol invasions of Goryeo began in 1231, and in response, the military regime relocated the capital to Ganghwa Island [강화도] in 1232, leading to a prolonged resistance that lasted 40 years, including the Sambyulcho [삼별초 三別抄] rebellion.

As the military regime weakened in 1258, Crown Prince—King Wonjong [원종 元宗]—visited the imperial court of Mongolia. During this time, Kublai, who was engaged in a struggle for the title of

Great Khan, received the crown prince. Kublai eventually became the Great Khan and, in 1271, changed the capital to Dayidu [대도 大都, Beijing] and renamed the empire Yuan [원 元]. Crown Prince Wonjong's son, King Chungnyeol [충렬왕 忠烈王], strengthened Goryeo's position within the Great Mongol Empire through his marriage to Kublai's daughter, Princess Jeguk [제국대장공주 齊國大長公主].

In 1258, Goryeo lost control of the Hwaju [화주 和州] region north of Liaodong, and the Mongols established the Ssangseong General Administrative Office [쌍성총관부 雙城總管府] there. In 1269, Goryeo also lost Seogyong (the Western Capital), where the Mongols set up the Dongnyung Prefecture [동녕부 東寧府]. During this period, Goryeo lost its territories north of the Tuman and West Amnok (Liaohe) Rivers for 98 years. Additionally, many peasants were displaced from their farmland and forced into servitude, leading to widespread social issues.

In 1356, King Gongmin [공민왕 恭愍王] ordered the military commanders of the northwestern and northeastern regions to reclaim the territories by attacking Dongnyeong Prefecture and Ssangseong General Administrative Office. As a result, Goryeo's northern boundary was restored to include the area south of present-day Shenyang [심양 瀋陽], reaching as far as Gonghomjin and Sunchunryeong [선춘령 先春嶺].

In 1368, Zhu Yuanzhang [주원장 朱元璋], leader of one of the peasant rebel forces under Yuan rule, established the Ming [명

明] Dynasty in Nanjing. That same year, he captured Dayidu (Beijing), forcing the Yuan to retreat north, where it became known as the Northern Yuan. In 1388, when the Ming Dynasty made unreasonable demands, such as notifying Goryeo of the establishment of the Cheollyeong Guard [철령위 鐵嶺衛] in present-day Fengjixian County [봉집현 奉集縣] of Liaoning Province, Goryeo launched a military expedition to Liaodong, initiating a conflict with the Ming.

However, the campaign was halted due to the famous Wihwado [위화도 威化島] Retreat led by Yi Seonggye [이성계 李成桂], which eventually led to the fall of Goryeo in 1392 and the founding of the Joseon [조선 朝鮮] Dynasty by Yi Seonggye. The new Joseon government implemented the Gwajonbop [과전법 科田法]—Land Reallocation Law—to address land issues, gaining support from farmers. Moreover, the state adopted a Sinocentric Confucian ideology.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This book presents a narrative of Korean history centered on Korean identity, grounded in primary sources, newly discovered sites, and recent research. As a result, it presents an expanded portrayal of Korea's historical territories and lineage, supported by documented evidence that exceeds what is found in existing textbooks. The book describes the extended territories of Goguryeo, including parts of Hebei Province and Inner Mongolia; the territories of Baekje, spanning the Bohai

Sea, Shandong, Wu—Yue regions, and the Japanese archipelago; and Gaya's expansion into the Japanese archipelago.

Significantly, the book revisits and corrects the politically distorted locations of the Four Han Commanderies and the Japanese Government of Imna, misrepresented by Japanese colonial historiography and China's Northeast Project [동북공정 東北工程], based on historical evidence. Additionally, it links the recently discovered Liaohe River Civilization with Hwanung and Gojoseon, providing supporting evidence for this connection. Where evidence remains inconclusive, the book leaves room for discussion and inference.

In addition, the book raises several research topics concerning territorial boundaries. They include questions such as: when and why the border between Daejin and Silla shifted from the Manchurian region to Hamgyungnam-do [함경남도]; when Silla lost its territories in Manchuria; the nature of Silla's expansion into Japan and its competition with Gaya and Baekje within Japan; and the origins of Goryeo's northern boundary in the Manchurian region. These topics, among others, are presented as areas for further study by future scholars.

The book would benefit from further elaboration on a few points. While it utilizes maps to portray the western borders of Gojoseon in relation to Gija Joseon, Wiman Joseon, and the Four Han Commanderies, a comprehensive map is lacking that shows the central area of Gojoseon along with its vassal states. This

makes it challenging to visualize the geographical positions of Gojoseon and the other states during the Era of Various Kingdoms.

Additionally, a discussion on several historical aspects would have been beneficial. These include the role of the Goryeo royal family within the Mongol Empire as part of the royal family (and their position within East Asian and world history), the fate of the alliance with the Northern Yuan after the Wihwado Retreat and how this affected Goryeo's campaign in Liaodong and subsequent relations with the Ming dynasty, and the possibility for Joseon's later tributary system to have stemmed from Goryeo's complex relationship with the Mongols. These additions could have provided valuable insights into the international relations between Goryeo, Joseon, and other East Asian countries during the period.

Furthermore, it would be helpful if the book addressed topics like the overlaps and relationships between Korean history and the histories of Dongyi, the positions of Khitan and Jurchen within China's unified multi-ethnic narrative. Such exploration, combined with directions for future research and discussion, could have fostered a forward-looking approach to understanding their intertwined histories.

In conclusion, this book reinterprets Korean history from a Korean perspective, correcting distortions caused by Sinocentrism and Japanese imperialism. It lays out an objective view of Korea's historical territory and lineage, grounded in primary sources, newly discovered sites,

and recent research. The text is clear and concise, making it easy to understand.

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in understanding Korean history and East Asia through a Korean lens, supported by historical sources and new findings. Additionally, it serves as a valuable reference for nations that have experienced colonialism, offering a model for rectifying historical distortions and reclaiming national identity.