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LELANG AND THE 'INTERACTION SPHERE': AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO KOREAN STATE FORMATION

Pai Hyung Il

Issues in Korean State Formation

The question of the earliest Korean states and the origins of the Korean race is currently the most controversial topic in Korean history and archaeology. Indeed controversy over the supposed first Korean state, Kochoson, has attracted considerable media attention with coverage in major newspapers and popular journals (Yun 1985, 1986). This controversy has highlighted problems with earlier interpretations by Korean scholars which have their origins in reactions to Japanese scholarship from the time when Korea was a colony of Japan (1910-1945). Japanese colonialist historical scholarship emphasised three points. Firstly, Japan and Korea were considered to share a common ancestral origin. Second, Korea was thought to be historically backward and third, Korean history was perceived as part of a wider historical sphere -- the so-called Mansen-shi -- that also incorporated the other Japanese colony, Manchuria (Ch'oe 1980, 17).

Even in the colonial era, however, a school of 'Nationalist History', represented by Sin Ch'ae-ho (1889-1936) and Ch'oe Nam-sun (1880-1957), focused on looking for a unique, indigenous and superior ancient Korean civilisation unaffected by any foreign influence. Nam-un Paek was the first to adopt a Marxist interpretation of Korean history, applying the sages of primitive communism, slave society and feudalism to succeeding periods of Korean prehistory (Paek 1933).

The core of the controversy over the first Korean state and its inhabitants concerns the dating and location of the first state and the degree of external influence on the process of state formation. The Yemaek people are considered to have been the original Koreans, and they are related to the state of Kochoson, usually located on or north of the Taedong River and dated to the seventh century BC. However a much earlier foundation date of c. 2333 BC and a duration of about two thousand years is claimed for Kochoson by Yun and the North Korean scholars, along with a different location, centred in the Liaoning region and stretching as far west as Hebei in China (Yun 1985, 34). This theory also denies any external influence, in the form of intervention in Kochoson affairs by military outposts or 'commanderies' of Han China (108 BC-313 AD), which are believed to have had a considerable effect on the development of the early Korean states. This is in direct contrast with traditional views of the 'Three Kingdoms' of Koguryo (in the north-east), Paekche (on and south of the Han River) and Silla (around modern Kyongju) as the first historical states.

Korean State Formation Theories

Korean state formation models can be divided into two schools. The first is represented by historians whose primary concern is with the
designation of the social evolutionary stages of Korean civilisation, essentially a combination of earlier Marxist interpretations, mentioned above, and Elman Service's scheme of band, tribe, chiefdom and state (Cohen and Service 1978). This model is accepted by archaeologists as well as historians, although it is more rigorously applied in the North Korean Marxist evolutionary scheme than in South Korean theories. North Korean scholars have also rejected the theory that Lelang, one of four postulated Han commanderies, represented influences from Han China. This stance has been followed by Yun who, as noted above, has produced a description of Kochoson as the first Korean state, based on the creative use of early myths and legends (Yun 1985, 1986).

The second school of state formation models is represented by archaeologists. Although sharing the evolutionary models of the historical school, the emphasis appears to be on more anthropological explanations of state development. The evidence employed by scholars such as Ch'oe Mong-nyong concerns subsistence practices, the organisation of labour, explanations of culture change, social organisation and settlement patterns. However Ch'oe never explains the exact connection between this detailed data (from the relatively large corpus of southern Korean Bronze Age material) and his conclusions about state formation around the 2nd century BC in the Wiman polity, located in modern P'yongyang (Ch'oe M.N. 1984, 1985).

Both these schools suffer in common from a number of conceptual problems. They are:

1. They attempt to relate historical names from texts to geographical areas and past ethnic groups.

2. They assume that archaeological 'cultures' or even single supposedly diagnostic artefacts represent ethnic groups or races.

3. They use sporadic evidence of a few bronze items selectively to advocate uniqueness or chronological precedence for a Korean state while ignoring local evidence produced by Chinese scholars showing diverse regional traditions in the Liaoning area with local continuity through the 8th to 3rd centuries BC (Jin 1982, 1987).

4. They directly equate social evolutionary stages with historical state names despite a lack of archaeological evidence clearly dated to the early periods in question which would support the existence of these social stages.

5. They assume that technological developments directly parallel the evolutionary stages of civilisation, ignoring the development of various civilisations along differing technological sequences, and assuming, for example, that distribution of iron coins represents an Iron Age culture or technology (Ch'oe M.N. 1983).

6. Mechanisms for change are mainly reduced to migrations from China, even though often no reasons for postulated large-scale migrations are
given, and they are attested to mainly by bronze burial goods from half-a-dozen graves rather than the sort of detailed evidence called for by scholars such as Rouse (1958, 63-68). Their theories characterise the 'invasion neurosis' (Clark 1966) of Korean archaeologists and historians who have suffered from scars left by imperialism, colonialism and the Korean War (Pai 1983).

7. The quest for origins has led to a preoccupation with diffusion of a few bronze items, while other crucial data such as burial forms, pottery, stratigraphy and settlement patterns, some of which have been shown to display local continuity (Yim 1983; Yim 1984), are ignored. Moreover, no explicit model for proving archaeologically diffusion of material culture traits, such as that proposed by Trigger (1968, 38-39) is used.

Thus instead of first looking at the archaeological data, and then constructing models using reliable contemporaneous textual material, Korean archaeologists have resorted to pigeon-holing finds into existing state models, myths and legends.

The Three Kingdoms in Korean State Formation

The definition of the 'state' in Korea has usually meant a 'laundry list' approach to the problem. However recent western archaeological work has suggested that the search for prime movers, classificatory studies and universal processual studies have not proved as fruitful as had been hoped, and attention has shifted to the dynamics of the state (Cherry 1978; Claessen 1984). Factors such as economic development, trade, religious ideology, legitimacy, political organisation and bureaucratic processes are perceived as interacting in complex systems (Claessen 1984), while secondary state formation processes have been termed 'intra-systemic' in their right (Cherry 1978, 415).

The historical period of the Three Kingdoms (1st century AD to 7th century AD) and the associated archaeologically recognised Kofun (cf. Japanese Kofun) period (4th century AD to 7th century AD) are considered to have states. The three states that make up the Three Kingdoms were Koguryo, Paekche and Silla, founded, according to dynastic legends, in 37 BC, 18 BC and 57 BC respectively (Yi and Yi 1983). However, archaeologists do not accept these dates as they are too early for the archaeological assemblages usually associated with the Three Kingdoms. The appearance of monumental burial mounds in the fourth century AD, at the beginning of the Kofun period, is considered to mark the earliest manifestations of these states (Kim 1986). Each state developed into statehood differently (Takeda 1980). They all meet both archaeological and documentary criteria of statehood, with civil administrations, armies and diplomatic missions. Distinct cultural variation is visible between geographically contiguous regions in the Kofun period, with each 'kingdom' displaying distinctive burial architecture, pottery, jewellery, and ornaments. All of the various forms were, however, unmistakably influenced by Han Chinese prototypes. Historical records indicate accompanying differences in social organisation, laws, customs, administration and military affairs. According to the textual evidence the three states were constantly warring against each other, while the courts were at the same time exchanging items of high art and culture. Paekche was the most active in this sphere, sending envoys in the form of Buddhist monks, scribes, painters and craftsmen as far afield as Japan. These activities reflect the independence of the three states in conducting foreign diplomacy and trade.

The Process of State Formation: the Interaction Sphere in Korean Prehistory

The above summary suggests that the earliest states were formed in Korea about five hundred years after the Han invasion in 108 BC, through a gradual process of internal development and external contact. In this section I will present some thoughts on the nature of these phenomena.

While Japanese society in the moulded tomb period was developing (see Hojo this volume), various forms of interaction were occurring between Japan and at least six major centres on the adjacent Asian mainland (Okuuchi 1986, 127). However, while there is general agreement that this interaction took place, there is as yet no systematic model to explain its origins, development and consequences.

I would argue that the process of state formation in Korea was initiated by the Han invasion and the establishment of the Lelang commandery in 108 BC and reached its peak in the Koguryo period. The high degree of Han China's role laid the foundations for both international and intraregional interactions in the form of exchanges of goods and information. Contemporaneous cultures in Japan were also drawn into what I have termed the 'Lelang Interaction sphere' (see Map).

The main impetus for inter-regional exchange was the desire for Chinese prestige goods such as bronze mirrors and gold accessories, as well as iron weapons and tools that were not available to local cultures. Thus, the interests of the Han empire in the Korean peninsula, in the form of the influence it exercised over the subordinate local systems through its commanderies, elicited different local responses which resulted in cultural and regional variety in Korea.

The Nature of the Interaction

I would postulate two levels of geographical zone in the Lelang interaction sphere, characterised by different forms of contact with the commandery. The first was the 'core area' of interaction at the location of Lelang and its surroundings, which historical records and archaeological data suggest was in and around present day P'yongyang (Komai 1965, 1972). Many graves have been discovered there contemporaneous with the Han period, that display distinctly local characteristics in their pottery, weapons and burial furniture. The area immediately surrounding Lelang, as part of the core area, (Hwanghae-do province to the south of P'yongyang) had direct contact with the centre. The second level geographical zones, comprising zones
two, three and four, had indirect contact with the centre. These two
types of contact are well expressed by Spicer (1861) as 'directed' and
'non-directed' contact situations respectively.

As well as the two levels of geographical zone, two chronological
stages can also be perceived in the Lelang interaction sphere. Stage
one (Figure 1a), lasting from the second century BC to the late third
century AD, began with the invasion by the Han Emperor Han Wudi in 108
BC and the establishment of the four commanderies of Lelang, Linhun,
Zhenfan and Xuantu, all but the first of which only lasted a few years.
This stage roughly corresponds to the archaeologically recognised Proto-
Three Kingdoms period (Kim 1988). Stage two (Figure 1b), lasting from
the fourth century AD to the seventh century AD, began with the decline
of the Eastern Han empire in the second century AD and the fall of
Lelang in 313 AD, two events which changed the political and cultural
appearance of the region. In this second stage, the centrifugal force
created by the Han presence was replaced by the divergence of
independent polities with similar levels of hierarchy and development.

Stage two of the Lelang interaction sphere model thus brings to
mind the concept of peer polities (Renfrew and Cherry 1986) in which
autonomous or self-governing polities were in competition for goods and
resources. In Korea regional polities which had their roots in stage
one of the interaction sphere developed into states with the demise of
the Lelang commandery, and competed with each other for hegemony in the
Three Kingdoms period. The military, diplomatic and cultural ties first
established in stage one were strengthened during the four centuries
following the demise of the influence of the Lelang commandery. There
is also considerable archaeological and historical evidence for
increased interaction between the state-like polities of Korea and Japan
at this time (Barnes 1978).

The Formation of Regional Boundaries

The following regional boundaries were established along with the
commanderies in 108 BC:

Region One: Core Area.

This was where the most important Lelang commandery centre was
situated, in the present city of P’yangyang. Japanese archaeologists
identified over 1400 Han burials and other structures south of the
Taedong River (Kayamoto 1962). The majority of the sites are situated
directly south of the Lelang commandery headquarters at T’osongri.
These sites have also yielded inscriptions on seals, lacquerware and
bricks that have made absolute dating possible (Mikami 1968). The
abundance of Han iron weapons, tools and chariot parts this area
apart from the rest of the peninsula. In terms of archaeological trade
models it is a 'direct trade zone' (Renfrew 1984; Bay and Yerbury 1976)
or a 'supply zone' (Clarke 1978, 429). The local inhabitants of
the region were the main beneficiaries of Chinese goods and weapons. Third
century records provide evidence for another social dimension to the
interaction, indicating that the Samban states of south-eastern Korea actively competed in sending envoys offering goods and services to Lelang officials (Kim 1983, 182). The wealth accumulated through such exchanges is most evident in wooden chambered burials replete with some of the most exquisite items ever found in Han tombs outside China.

Region Two: Koguryo.
This is the northernmost region, situated on the upper reaches of the Yalu and Tuman rivers, differentiated from the other three regions by its northern steppe landscape. Historical texts put the warlike nature of the Koguryo people down to the lack of agricultural lands in the highlands, forcing the inhabitants to find resources elsewhere. As excellent horsemen and archers they raided rather than planted for a living. This nomadic lifestyle is testified to by the murals depicting hunting scenes and horse riders in Koguryo tombs. Mounds of piled stones, the archaeological remains of these tombs, are predominantly found in present day Jian on both sides of the Yalu and the tributaries of the Dokmo river.

Region Three: Paekche.
This region comprises three river basins, those of the Han, the Kum and the Yongsan. The Iron Age sites around the Han river and its tributaries are distributed along the southern bend of the river on the outskirts of Seoul in Sokcho-dong, Pangidong and Karakdong. They are generally interpreted as belonging to the Hansong or capital phase of the Paekche kingdom prior to its move south to Ungjin (modern Kongju) and then later to Sabi (modern Puyo) in the fifth and sixth centuries AD respectively. According to texts these moves were necessitated by the southern expansion of Koguryo as well as its military defeat of Paekche. As a result, the predominant dynastic remains are clustered in the area around Kongju and Puyo (on the Kum and Yongsan Rivers). The prehistoric sites on the Kum and Yongsan rivers are also renowned for their concentration of some of the largest funerary jars found in Korea containing gold crowns and ornaments. These goods are undoubtedly from the early Kobun period, indicative of continuity in burial practices from the appearance of the first jar burials in the Iron Age.

Region Four: Kaya and Silla.
This region is situated on the south-eastern tip of the Korean peninsula, separated from Japan only by the narrow Tsushima Strait. The archaeological record of this region closely parallels that of northern Kyushu from the beginnings of the Yayoi and into the Kofun period (see Hudson this volume). The Kyongju plains are dotted with burial mounds from more than a thousand years of pre-dynastic and dynastic Silla occupation, while the Pusan area is the centre of Kaya burial distribution. The sites of Yeonri and Pokch'ondong are noted for an abundance of iron weapons, cavalry armour and helmets. The sites also displayed the first concrete manifestations of substantial social stratification in the Kobun period, including evidence of human sacrifice (Pusan University 1982-1983, 1985). The most important sites indicating Han Chinese influence in this region are Choyeondong in Kyongju and Pyongnidong in Taegu. These are two burial sites with
Conclusion: The Significance of Lelang in Korean Prehistory

Once the regional boundaries as described above were formed during stage one of the interaction sphere (2nd century BC to 3rd century AD), the distinct groups or polities began to display what Renfrew has characterised as 'distinctive group behaviour', where the differential nature of interactions with members of the group as opposed to those outside it served to reinforce the cognitive identity of the group. Renfrew has furthermore suggested that this feedback mechanism gives social groups their distinctiveness (Renfrew 1984: 29). Historical circumstances in Korea helped to reinforce those distinctions in stage two of the interaction sphere with the decline of Lelang. Koguryo maintained hostile relations with the commandery of Lelang, eventually bringing about its collapse in 313 AD. This animosity readily explains why Koguryo was the region of Korea whose cultural remains and customs were least affected by the Han. In contrast to this in the Pyongyang area, the archaeological data indicate substantial acculturation levels in terms of technology and ritual behaviour. The relationship between the Samban (in regions 3 and 4) and Lelang seems to have been one of economic exchange and competition (Kim W.Y. 1983). Thus each region of Korea had a very different relationship with China, through its outpost of Lelang, during the two stages of interaction.

Previous studies of Lelang in Korean prehistory have traditionally been seen the commandery as a negative force that impeded the development of Korean indigenous states (Yi 1981; Yi and Yi 1983). Only Kim Won-yong has emphasised that Lelang was directly responsible for laying down the basis for Korean state formation (Kim 1986, 119). The three most important innovations from Lelang according to Kim were gold craftsmanship, iron manufacturing and rice agriculture (Kim 1986). The significance of this interaction sphere model is its ability to integrate these forces of change with the mechanisms and processes of the development of indigenous cultures not considered by Kim.

Thus the concept of the two stage interaction sphere provides an overall framework of interpretation in space and time. The model also reconciles the dichotomy between the two main schools of thought concerning state formation, combining elements of class conflict and warfare (Fried 1987; Carneiro 1970) as well as of trade, alliances and social integration (Adams 1966; Ratble 1971; Service 1975).

Current state formation theories centre on the 'cluster-interactions model' (Price 1977) and the concept of 'peer polity interaction' (Renfrew and Cherry 1988). The main point of the latter is that state formation is only intelligible on a multi-unit and multi-regional scale. Renfrew has described the emergence of Aegean states in the Bronze Age as akin to a process of pulling each other by the bootstraps (1986, 151). These small states shared the common elements of Greek civilisation: language, religion, shared history, similar (but not identical) institutions, and equivalent agricultural and commercial practices. Therefore the focus of study ought to be upon the interactions among these peer polities that made possible what was in some ways a common trajectory of development.

Data for early Chinese states also suggest regional polities, overlapping in time and space, fighting and competing for prestige goods and resources. Chang Kwang Chih has argued that, contrary to historical records and dynastic legends, archaeological evidence indicates that the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties probably overlapped rather than each succeeding the previous dynasty through war and annihilation (Chang 1983). For proto-historic Japan, Gina Barnes has documented how polity formation was related to elite regional interaction and competition that affected local productive systems (Barnes 1986).

In this paper I have argued that the Korean data are no exception to these models in that there were regional interacting 'peer polities' in the development towards complex state organisation. Nonetheless the most distinctive factor in Korea was the stimulus provided by an intrusive source, the Han commandery of Lelang, and its prolonged contact with Korean polities at a critical juncture in state development. Thus, I see both exogenous and exogenous inspirations for the growth of early civilisations in late Korean prehistory.

Notes
1. This article is based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation, Lelang and the Interaction Sphere in Korean Prehistory, to be submitted shortly to the Department of Anthropology, Harvard University.
2. All ancient places and names in the Korean peninsula are in the McCune Reischauer system except the Chinese commanderies.
3. This is the Japanese designation for the field of study, meaning literally history of 'Mansen' (the Japanese colonies of Korea and Manchuria).
4. The Samban are the Mahen, Pyonhan and Chinhan mentioned in the Dongyizhan chapter of the Sanguo zhi. Historically known as the Three Han, they are traditionally placed in the southern provinces of Ch'ungchong-do, Ch'olla-do and Kyongsang-do (Ch'on K.U. 1976).

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HUMAN SACRIFICE AND ANCIENT CHINESE SOCIETY

Huang Zhan Yue

Human sacrifice, the practice of burying the living with their deceased clan head, patriarch or feudal lord as an act of worship of the gods or ancestors, was common in ancient societies from the stage of late primitivism to that of early autocratic monarchy. In China, as in most nations of the Old World, this practice started in the late primitive period, but rather than disappearing with the emergence of the state, continued through the Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han and later dynasties, right up until the revolution of 1911. The long duration and profound impact of human sacrifice in China is thus unparalleled in any other country. This paper discusses why human sacrifice endured for so long in China, and the relation between its emergence, development and decline and ancient social developments.

It is generally thought that large-scale human sacrifice was associated with the emergence of class structure and the state. Archaeological discoveries in China suggest that human sacrifice reached a peak during the late Shang dynasty. Excavations at the Yin imperial tombs site at Houjiuzhuang, have shown that the majority of human sacrifices were from early tombs, generally the larger ones and to a lesser extent in medium-sized tombs, and that the majority of those sacrificed were young males or fully adult males who had been beheaded. Oracle bone inscriptions also suggest that the majority of sacrifices were made in the early Wu Ding phase of the dynasty. Later sacrificial finds from ritual deposits and tombs at the Yin site are much rarer and involve smaller numbers of victims, most of whom were adult females, youths and children, or, in the larger tombs, mainly youths and children. No sacrifices are found in the medium-sized tombs of this period. Oracle bone inscriptions confirm this declining trend.

This change from the early to the late phase of the Yin ruins reflects a change in the attitude of the ruling classes to the value of human life. Since the victims were mainly prisoners of war, the popularity of human sacrifice in the early phase suggests a well-developed military capable of launching large-scale wars, but at the same time that there was little exploitable surplus value in the wealth these prisoners could produce. These are important indicators of a society in the primitive stage of a slave state. The decrease in human sacrifice and the trend towards more female and young victims in the later phase may indicate that many of the young, especially male, prisoners were used as slave labour, indicating the development of a fully-fledged slave state.

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the gradual increase in human sacrifice through the Shang dynasty to a peak in the late Shang, and a change in type of sacrificial victim from the wives and concubines of deceased males to close courtiers and personal servants. This change indicates the existence of the state and that those immolated were victims of class conflict. It also reflects the increasing

(Archaeological Review from Cambridge 8:1 [1989])