

NOTE TO TYPESETTER:

- 1) CHANGE ALL ^ TO MACRONS.
- 2) CHANGE ALL ` TO INVERTED CIRCUMFLEXES

**Japanese Anthropology and the
Discovery of Prehistoric “Korea”**

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THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN KOREAN IDENTITY FORMATION ¹

The disciplines of archaeology and ethnology were introduced into the Korean peninsula by Japanese scholars a century ago (Pai 1994). Ever since the founding of Japan’s first anthropological association in 1884,² archaeology and ethnology had been focused upon the recovery of physical and cultural remnants that would illuminate the origins of the Japanese state and its civilization (Oba 1962: 233, Takahashi 1988). It was in such a spirit that the pioneers of the new field of East Asian Studies (J. Tôyôgaku) (Yoshikawa 1976), such as Sekino Tadashi, Torii Ryûzô, Tsuboi Shôgoro, Shiratori Kurakichi, Imamura Tomo, Kuroita Katsumi, Harada Yoshito, Umehara Sueji, and Hamada Kôsaku (Mishina 1962; Seki 1962; Mishina and Murakami 1978; Saitô 1980, 1985), extended their research to the Korean peninsula and further into Manchuria, Mongolia, Siberia, and the Russian Maritime Province (Torii 1946, 1976). The

¹ In this article, the names of Korean historical entities, periodizations, and archaeological terms are romanized in the McCune-Reischauer system. Chinese Pinyin equivalent of some proper nouns will be cited in brackets when first appearing in the text. This article keeps the commonly accepted Japanese pronunciations for Japanese colonial institutions, sources, and policies. Prehistoric chronologies and periodization rely on Kim W. L. 1986. Historical dates are taken from Yi K. B. and Yi K. D. 1983.

² The association’s founder was Tsuboi Shôgoro, who was then a medical student at Tokyo University. In 1886, the association was officially named the “Tôkyô Jinruigakkai” and launched its own journal, Jinruigakkai hôkoku, containing articles on ethnographic research (minzokugaku), ethnology (jinshûgaku), and folklore (minsokugaku). Under the name of “Jinruigaku Zasshi,” it continues to this day as the longest running anthropological publication in Japan (Seki 1962: 84).

expansion of their fieldwork into these formerly uncharted areas became possible because of Japan's military victories in the Sino-Japanese (1894-1895) and Russo-Japanese Wars (1904-1905), and the subsequent annexation of the Korean peninsula following the Treaty of Portsmouth (1905). To a significant extent, the "discovery" and documentation of new peoples, cultures, and past civilizations all over Northeast Asia was made possible by the transportation, protection, and funding provided by the Research Division of the Japanese-funded South Manchuria Railroad (Mantetsu Chôsabû) (MSCR 1915-1941). The fact that the beginnings of Japanese anthropology were directly linked to their empire building activities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries mirrors the "colonial situations" (Stocking 1988, 1991) that opened opportunities to German, French, and British pioneers who established the archaeological study of ancient civilizations in Europe (Trigger 1989).

As to who and what constituted the "ethnic," or "racial,"³ groups of Northeast Asia, the Japanese fieldwork at the turn of the century for the most part refined classifications that had been proposed earlier by Russian anthropologists (Torii 1925; Levin 1972; Forsyth 1994).⁴ Japanese scholars, such as Shiratori Kurakichi and Torii Ryûzô, agreed with their Russian colleagues — Leopold von Schrenck, E.G. Ravenstein, and S.M. Shirokogoroff, to name but a few (Wada 1938) — that Manchuria, Korea, and the Russian Maritime Province had been a central prehistoric meeting place, where all "Far Eastern" races, including the Paleo-Asiatics, Tungus,

³ Japanese colonial period publications, regardless of whether they are written by scholars or administrators, frequently do not distinguish between concepts such as race, tribe, clan, ethnic group, and ethnic state. Terms such as *shûzoku*, *minzoku*, and *minzoku kokka* were applied interchangeably, implying Japan's "homogenous" origins (Morris-Suzuki 1995). It was also a common practice for the authors to project their nationalistic concept of the isomorphism of "race = ethnicity = culture = history = language = nation" upon their descriptions of other peoples in Northeast Asia. In this study, therefore, I have chosen for the sake of consistency to use the term "racial" in a meaning that, besides the concept of "race" in the conventional sense, encompasses what most contemporary anthropologists would designate by the term "ethnic."

⁴ Torii Ryûzô (1925: 6) in his preface to his monumental tome *Kyokutô Minzoku* writes that he was indebted to his Russian predecessors for his information and resources. Shirokogoroff was sent by the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg to conduct fieldwork in Manchuria, Mongolia, and China in the early 1900's and is still regarded as the main authority on Altaic and Tungusic linguistic and cultural studies (Shirokogoroff and Mironov 1924; Shirokogoroff 1966a, 1966b, 1970).

Manchus, and Koreans, had evolved together (Shiratori 1986, Torii 1925, 1976). Their classification scheme rested on the basic assumption that the indigenous inhabitants of the regions of the Sungari, Yalu, and Amur river valleys (J. Manshû genjûmin, “Indigenous Manchurians”), and the Ainu in the northern portions of the Japanese archipelago, had remained culturally unchanged since “prehistoric times.”⁵ The “indigenous” nature of such primitive peoples, these scholars argued, was proven by the fact that a large number of ethnic groups still continued, even in the early 20th century, to lead what they perceived as “primitive” and “backward” lives, practicing subsistence activities as fishing, hunting, and gathering, and adhering to nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles (Shiratori 1934, 1986, Shirokogoroff 1966a).⁶ Adding a Sinological dimension to the efforts of their Russian colleagues, the early 20th-century Japanese scholars insisted on the incorporation of Chinese historical records on ancient Northeast Asian peoples such as the Eastern Yi (K. Tongi/ C. Dongyi), Sushen, Yilou, Xiongnu, Yemaek (C. Weimo or Huimai), and Chosòn (C. Chaoxian) into the ethnographic and historical accounts of the racial

⁵ The notion that Manchuria was a special place to be distinguished from China proper was later adapted as a political tool for legitimizing Japanese occupation of Manchuria and North China (Hirano 1986:50). As a result, “racial harmony” (J. minzoku kyôwa) became the most popular catch phrase propagated by official channels prior to and following the state-building activities (J. kenkoku) of the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo in 1931-32 (McCormack 1991). They unanimously advocated the ideology of “ethnic co-existence” of the Five Races — the Manchurians, Han Chinese, Mongols, Koreans, and of course the Japanese — for the good of a multi-ethnic empire (Hirano 1986). In a slightly different vein, the Ainu of Karafuto (Southern Sakhalin) became the focus of “identity” negotiations during the 19th- 20th century for they were regarded as the “earliest inhabitants” of Japan (Koyû no Nihonjin) by anthropologists and colonial policy makers (Morris-Suzuki 1995; Suzuki 1995).

⁶ The anthropologists who arrived in the late 19th and early 20th century in these regions acknowledged that there were major challenges (Shirokogoroff 1966a, Torii 1946) to their ethnological research for they were by no means dealing any longer with a “prehistoric,” “primitive,” or “pre-contact” situation. During the previous two centuries, the establishment of Russian missions and military installations, and the subsequent economic exploitation in pursuit of the fur trade and the search for mining resources had resulted in mass displacements of native societies, incurring long range tribal/clan migrations and the disintegration of traditional subsistence strategies based on fishing and hunting. The unstable political and economic situations in Korea and North China had also incurred mass migrations of millions of peasants, laborers, and political exiles seeking new opportunities and land for resettlement in the previously sparsely-populated Chinese Northeast (Forsyth 1994).

lineage of the Japanese, Koreans, Mongols, and Manchus (Ikeuchi 1951; Inoue 1974; Shiratori 1970, 1986; Wada 1938).

This imperialist legacy of Northeast Asian ethnic classification schemes is still entrenched in the anthropological and historical literature even today. After the demarcation of new political and ideological boundaries that followed the demise of the Japanese empire in World War II, scholars, intellectuals, and nation-building bureaucrats emerging from the newly formed states — from Mongolia, the People’s Republic of China, North and South Korea, all the way to Taiwan (Harrell 1995) — adopted the main tenets of the Japanese colonial racial framework. To this day, they continue to identify with the old platitudes concerning the “indigenous,” “prehistoric” origins of distinct races, which they have incorporated into their new nationalistic narratives, constructed to explain the foundations of their respective modern ethnic states (Smith 1986). These ethnic regeneration phenomena are highly ironical in view of the commonly held beliefs of the educated citizens of these countries, who proudly embrace and celebrate the uniqueness of their respective nations, racial origins, cultural unity, and historical destiny, without at all realizing that they are buying into nationalistic identity construction projects that are actually a product of the colonial era (Befu 1993, Duara 1995, Harrell 1995, Robinson 1988) directly tied to 19th and 20th century Russian and Japanese imperialism in Northeast Asia.

Such complex intertwined colonial legacies can be observed with special poignancy in the two Koreas, where, well over half a century since independence from Japanese rule (1910-1945), racial theories dating from the early colonial period continue to be inextricably linked to the contemporary discourse on “Korean” national identity. In Korean archaeological and historical works, race (K. minjok) is defined by one’s blood lineage (K. hyòlt’ong) as directly descended from a succession of dynastic founders (K. kukjo) and bounded by the territorial unity of a nation state (K. yòngyòk kukka). Representing a combination of the imported Western concepts of race, racial hybridity, and territorial nation, overlaid with the traditional Confucian emphasis on lineage (Dikötter 1992) and dynastic genealogy, this definition is still essentially

based on the work of Shiratori, who first applied this methodology to historical materials from Manchuria and the Korean peninsula (Shiratori 1986). Contemporary scholars as well as the general public still accept as fundamental Shiratori's basic lineage of a "Korean" nation that had survived intact from the prehistory to the present, beginning from the "Paleo-Asiatics" (ca. 3rd millennium BC), who evolved into the "pure Tungus" (ca. 2nd millennium BC), who in turn became the Yemaek (contemporary with the Warring States period, 5th-3rd centuries BC), who later founded Puyò (1st century BC), finally becoming the people of the Three Kingdoms of the first half of the first millennium AD (Koguryò, Paekche, and Silla), after which time one may follow the historical Korean dynastic sequence (Shiratori 1934: 1517-18). Based on this sequence, innumerable individual and official reconstructions from both North and South Korea now claim "Korean" sovereignty over the same long-lost ancestral homelands far beyond the boundaries of the Korean peninsula. In particular, Korean prehistorians are preoccupied with a myriad of contested claims over the hypothetical geographic locations of Kochosòn (Yun, N. H. 1986), Samhan (Ch'òn, K.U. 1976), Puyò, Koguryò, Pohai, Paekche, and Kaya (Ch'oe, C.S. 1990; Hong 1990). These ancient states, all perceived as ancestral to the Korean nation, are thought to range geographically from the Chinese Northeast to the southern islands of Japan (Yang, T. J. 1987, Ch'oe, M. J. 1982). The resulting territorial claims to the detriment of those of Korea's current neighbor states are historically legitimized in terms of racial origins; and rather than mere territorial gain, their principal stated aim is to take possession of the Korean artistic, archaeological, and cultural heritage.⁷

What should interest prehistorians in this connection is that such dubious claims for ancient "Korean" sovereignty over wide parts of Northeast Asia rely on excavated archaeological

⁷ The political ramifications of the archaeologist's role (Shennan 1989) in identifying, and explaining which "ancestors" had manufactured, used, and left behind artifacts and collections is evident in today's ongoing worldwide battles for contested ancestral lands. The stakes are high when we consider that the outcome of court cases and diplomatic negotiations relying on the "expert" testimony of archaeologists and anthropologists can be instrumental in deciding political borders, citizenship, rights to mineral and commercial resources, or the repatriation of art objects (Clifford 1988).

finds. Excavated data are pigeonholed into ancient Chinese textual sources in attempts to pinpoint today's equivalent of the names of ancient rivers, mountain ranges, or fortresses in order to draw the boundaries of ancient "Korea." But needless to say, rather than being truly "scientific" in nature, such analyses are based on a widely-scattered, highly selective sample of artifacts or features that are more or less arbitrarily identified as "Korean." Examples include the so-called "Korean" slim daggers (K. Han'guk sehyòng tonggòm), "Koguryò-type" roof-tiles (K. Koguryò-sik wadang), "Koguryò-type" mounded burials in Manchuria and Mongolia, and "Korean"-style crowns, armor, horse gear, and weapons found in the Japanese islands. Recently, nationalistic efforts on the part of Korean scholars to trace back a "Korean" identity further and further into prehistory have claimed "Korean" ethnicity for stone-cist burials of the Late Bronze Age Upper Xiajiadian culture and even for the Neolithic Hongshan sites in the Liao River valley (Pak, C.U. 1988). This relentless search for "Korean" racial markers in prehistory and proto-history has disregarded rigorous archaeological criteria such as absolute dating, stratigraphy, cultural assemblage, and settlement/subsistence data that are minimally needed to prove migrations, invasions, and foreign conquest (Rouse 1958, 1986), to say nothing of warrior races, marauding tribes, or royal clans of horse-riding nomads (Egami 1964, Ledyard 1975). But such niceties have been of no concern to the general public on both sides of the Straits of Japan, which from colonial times till the present day has continually been fascinated with studies of "Korean-Continental" and "Korean-Japanese" cultural exchange (Ch'òn, K.U. 1984, Kurihara 1978). This is no doubt because the cultural, racial, and historical connections drawn in such works continue to be presented as being critical to the understanding of the evolution of "Korean" and Japanese civilizations of today and hence directly tied to the formation of their respective national identities.

At present, the general consensus among South Korean prehistorians is that the racial ancestry of modern Korea can be traced back in the Korean peninsula to as early as the Neolithic

(ca. 5th-3rd millennium BC), at the latest to the Bronze Age (ca. 1000 BC).⁸ This early “Korean” civilization is defined by a laundry list of traits such as the appearance of pottery, dolmen building, settled village life, Shamanism, rice cultivation, bronze weapons, and iron technology (Kim, W.L. 1986, Yun, M.B. 1987), that to their authors indicate the emergence of chiefdoms (Choi 1984) and/or states (Yi, K.B. and Yi, K.D. 1983). In the view of most scholars, technological and organizational innovations were supposedly brought over by a series of migrating races beginning with “Paleo-Asiatic” hunter-gatherers coming from Siberia, who were followed by “Tungusic” nomads such as the Yemaek (Kim, C.B. 1976) and, in time, by Han Chinese agriculturalists. Their hypothetical migration routes sometimes connect Korea with areas as far west as Central Asia (according to some theories, the area of origin of Altaic languages); with far northern places somewhere in the vastness of Manchuria, Mongolia, and Siberia; or even with the islands of Indonesia in the distant south (Kim, B.M. 1981). The migrating races are quite nonchalantly identified as “Korean” or “Proto-Korean” just by virtue of having successfully maneuvered their way into their alleged final destination, the Korean peninsula. Even in mainstream archaeological and historical treatments, the Koreans’ “imagined homelands” (cf. Anderson 1993) range from Lake Baikal eastward to the valleys of the Amur, Sungari, and Yalu rivers and the mountain peaks of the Changbaishan (K. Paektusan) range.⁹

Contrary to the claims of some current advocates who shamelessly take credit for having rediscovered previously untapped and unmapped “prehistoric” Korean territories,¹⁰ these vast

⁸ This article will not deal with North Korean archaeological publications, as their research agenda since the Korean War have been mostly concerned with legitimizing Kim Il-sŏng’s view of historical development of communist struggle.

⁹ Ch’oe Nam-sŏn (Ch’oe, N. S. 1930; Allen 1990) is usually cited as the earliest pioneer in the westward search for Korean origins. He is most famous for his Pulhamnon theory proposed in the late 1920’s (Cho, Y.M. 1964) that claimed that Paektusan (C. Changbaishan), which he considered as the axis mundi and the sacred birthplace of Tangun, the legendary ancestor of the Korean people, had also been the source of all Far Eastern civilization (Tongbang). He wrote that similar sounding place names to “Pulhamsan” such as the Volga, Bukhara, Ferghana, and the Balkans meant that they had originated in ancient Korean culture.

¹⁰ The most notorious case is that of Yun Nae-hyŏn, who made headline news in the 1980’s

geographical regions were first demarcated as relevant to the study of ancient Korea — and Japan — by Japanese anthropologists and historians in the late 19th and early 20th century. Their cultural amalgamation (J. kongô bunka) theory served to explain the complex and diverse origins of Japanese culture (Tanaka 1993). Simply stated, it proposed that the “unique” (koyû) nature of Japanese culture was transmitted (J. tsûrai) from Indochina, South China (south of the Yangzi River), and Indonesia by several waves of migrations of rice agriculturalists; later on in the Yayoi and Kofun times (3rd century BC-4th century AD), the nomadic/warrior races from Manchuria (who were related to Koguryò and Puyò) migrated through Korea to be transformed into the Imperial lineage (J. Tennô shûzoku) who set up the Taika state (Oka 1962: 14-20). In Japan, the national reverence of this entirely hypothetical argument for the formation of the imperial state continues to symbolize the continuity of Japanese culture since prehistoric times (Fujitani 1993).

It is obvious, therefore, that contemporary nationalist theories concerning the racial origins of both Japan and Korea, as well as the contested nature of the overlapping “cultural” and territorial boundaries between them, cannot be understood without understanding the history of archaeological and ethnographic research in Northeast Asia. In the remainder of this article, I shall attempt briefly to contextualize the archaeological and ethnohistoric knowledge that a wide-range of specialists on Northeast Asia still employ (Aikens and Higuchi 1983; Pulleyblank 1983; Hanihara 1986). This article will only focus on what I consider to be the three most conspicuous legacies originating in Japanese colonial scholarship that still dominate Korean state formation theories: (1) the discovery of prehistoric “Korea;” (2) racial origins and racial determinism; and

when he postulated that the Kochosòn state, contemporary with the Shang and Zhou civilizations in the North China Plain, had once encompassed Northern Hebei, Liaoning, Shandong, and northern Korea down to the P’yongyang area. As I have pointed out in earlier works (Pai 1989, 1994), his proposal was nothing new, as a North-Korean author, Hong Ki-mun, had already denied the existence of the Han commandery of Lelang in the Korean peninsula as early as 1949. Recent press accounts suggest that I had rather underestimated the degree of Yun’s lack of originality: Yi Chòng-gu (in Munhwa Ilbo 1995. 6. 28) has recently broken the long-standing academic silence about Yun’s plagiarist tendencies by publicly accusing him of having lifted most of his ideas and sources without a single acknowledgment from the work of the prominent North Korean archaeologist Ri Chi-rin, who had identified Kochosòn in Liaodong by systematically reinterpreting Chinese textual sources (Ri, C. R. 1963).

(3) racial invasions as the main catalyst for cultural change, as well as the identification of the “foreign” nature of the colonial regime.

THE DISCOVERY OF PREHISTORIC “KOREA”

Before the arrival of Japanese scholars in the late 19th century, there was no discussion or any kind of scholarship concerned with prehistory (K. sònsa) in Korean documents. No excavations, collections of artifacts, conservation of monuments or museum collections had been undertaken. The concepts of prehistoric ethnic origins, primitive races, and cultural evolution were all imported from Europe via Japan (Doak 1995). What can be regarded as “Ancient Studies” (Ch’oe, S.K. 1987) mostly pertained to traditional historiographical pursuits that resembled the antiquarianism that had been widely practiced in China since the Song dynasty with its heavy emphasis on inscriptions (Chang 1981, 1986: 4-12). Because of the centrality of Confucian ancestor worship, historical scholarship during the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) had been pre-occupied with genealogy, especially that of dynastic clan founders (Deuchler 1992). It was due to such considerations that the Yi government had kept up the maintenance of the royal burials not only of the reigning dynasty, but also of the preceding Koryò dynasty (Fujita 1952).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the three founding ancestors of the Korean nation — Tangun, Kija (C. Jizi) and Wiman (C. Weiman) — were commonly referred to as the “Three Chosòn” (K. Sam Chosòn), and they were placed in the dynastic sequence of Tangun Chosòn, Kija Chosòn, and Wiman Chosòn. We must here briefly digress to introduce each of these figures.

The earliest record of the legend of Tan’gun appears in the 13th century text Samguk Yusa (Yi, P.D. 1981b) and describes the birth of the mythical ancestor Tan’gun, who was born between the union between the son of heaven, Hwan-ung, and a bear turned into a human female, Ungnyò. In modern nationalist historiography, his birth is equated with the founding of the Korean nation, and its date has been calculated to 2333 BC. It is also postulated that the first Korean state called “Kochosòn” was established by Tangun at that time. By tracing the “Korean”

origins to its racial ancestor Tan'gun, the antiquity of Korean culture and civilization is currently estimated to be over five thousand years old, paralleling that of Shang China and preceding the emergence of Japanese state formation. For nationalist historians, the Tan'gun narrative constitutes the main testament that Korean national origins are “pure” and free of “cultural” or “racial” contamination (Yi, K.B. 1990).

The figure of Kija is mentioned in ancient Chinese historical records. A relative of the Shang kings, he admonished the Zhou king Wu Wang (r. ca. 1049-1043 BC) for having overthrown the Shang, after which he may have fled (or threatened to do so) because he could no longer live in a land that had lost its principles (Imanishi 1937: 135). In one version, Kija reportedly fled east to be enfeoffed in Chosòn as a lord, setting up his capital in P'yòngyang. Kija achieved great prominence at the time of the establishment of the Yi dynasty in the late 14th century, when the dynasty's founder, Yi Sòng-gye, hand-picked Kija as an ancestral link to Chinese antiquity so that he could serve as the key to legitimize the dynasty (Imanishi 1937: 136, Han 1985). He set up Kija as the ancestral Yi clan god (K. Shinin) and declared himself to be his successor (Imanishi 1937: 147), naming his dynastic state as “Chosòn” after Kija's fiefdom of Chaoxian. Kija was selected for his illustrious lineage ties to the royal Shang family, as well as for being a sage of great learning, who had not hesitated to speak up against the Zhou king. He was now revered as the first king of Chosòn and as a Confucian culture hero who had civilized Korea by introducing the well-field system, sericulture, writing, history, poetry, music, ceremony, medicine, witchcraft, Yin-yang principles, divination and various arts (Gale 1900: 1-2). He was credited with the authorship of part of a Confucian classic: the “Great Plan” (Hongfan), one of the most important chapters in the Book of History (C. Shangshu, or Shujing) (Legge 1868: 320-344), which became the basis of the “Eight Rules” (K. P'alcho) allegedly adopted by ancient Chosòn (Imanishi 1937: 132-133; Kim, C.J. 1991: 9). In this way, Kija became the most important political symbol of the Yi dynasty. Over five hundred years, until the early 20th century, various kings financed the erection of shrines and steles dedicated to him and organized festivals in his memory that were celebrated as important dynastic events.

The third of the ancestral figures, Wiman, is recorded in the late second-century BC text Shiji as a general who came originally from the state of Yan but arrived in Chosòn in 195 BC after a failed coup attempt (Watson 1968: 258-263). He managed to bring under his control the regions of Chinbòn (C. Chenfan), which he ruled as king from his capital at Wanggòm sòng (Watson 1968: 258-263). In the late 18th century, Yi Ik (1681-1763) advocated that Wiman should not be regarded as a legitimate ancestor of the Koreans because he was nothing more than a barbarian usurper and furthermore had used deceit to throw out Kijun, a descendent of Kija (Pai forthcoming); he proposed an alternative sequence of legitimate states, known as the “Legitimacy of the Three Han” (K. Samhan Chòngt’ongnon), in which the ruler Chunwang of the southern principality of Mahan (a loyalist to Kija’s dynasty, who, according to the Weizhi, had fled south before Wiman) replaced Wiman as the legitimate successor of Tan’gun and Kija (Yi, P.D. 1981a: 50). But Wiman has been rehabilitated in recent decades. Yi Pyòng-do was the first to revised his image of a “Chinese usurper” to that of an accepted “Kochosòn” leader (Yi, P.D. 1981a; Yi, K.B. and Yi, K.D. 1983: 62). This was possible because, according to the theories of early 20th-century Japanese scholars, Wiman’s home state of Yan was now included as part of the Korean ancestral realm. The prominent historian Yi Ki-baek concurred, further speculating that Wiman was of Tongi rather than of Chinese ethnicity, for, according to the Shiji, “Wiman had gathered together a band of a thousand or more followers and adopting the mallet-shaped hairdo and dress of Eastern Barbarians, escaped over the Eastern border” and “King Kijun had trusted him enough to let him guard the frontier.” According to Yi Ki-baek, these allusions to “Tongi” dress and hairstyle constitute convincing proof that Wiman was an indigenous (K. t’ochak) regional tribal chief who was an active participant in the central administration of Chosòn. (Yi, K.B. and Yi, K.D. 1983: 62). Modern nationalist historians have thus once again embraced Wiman as a local “Korean” lineage ancestor.

The fantastical nature of the transmitted accounts on Tangun’s divine birth, Kija’s Confucian morality and cultural achievements, and Wiman’s military exploits, reflect their literary inspiration from traditional Chinese historiography, which described the rise and fall of

dynasties descended from mythical founders according to the “mandate of heaven” (Creel 1970). In Korea, the significance of these three figures was first discussed in the 18th century by prominent scholars of the Practical Learning (K. Sirhak) school, such as An Chông-bok, Han Ch’i-yun and Yi Ik (Lee et al 1996). However, these scholars had mainly been concerned with their historical project of strengthening the dynastic legitimacy (K. chôngt’ong) of the Yi royal lineage by linking its clan origins directly to ancient China. Contrary to the views of Han Yông-U (1989), who has argued for tracing the roots of Korean nationalist historiography to these scholars more than two hundred years ago, my reading suggests that their works cannot be considered as “nationalistic” by 20th century standards, since they lack any notion of the prehistoric origins of a “Korean” race and of its cultural homogeneity or unified statehood since early times.

With the arrival of Japanese scholars trained in the Western academic disciplines of archaeology, geology, art history, and ethnography, the “Three Chosôn” came to be radically redefined. The first generation of colonial Japanese specialists in Korean history (J. Chôsenshi), represented by Naitô Konan, Shiratori Kurakichi, Ôda Shôgo, and Imanishi Ryû, concentrated on exposing their non-historical nature. The legend of Tangun was tackled by Shiratori as early as 1894 (Shiratori 1970: 1-14). In his “Dankun-kô,” he argued that this legend, recorded in the 13th century, could not have pre-dated the kingdom of Koguryò of the Three Kingdoms period. The numerous Buddhist-influenced terms and deities scattered throughout the text, and its similarity to the legend about the birth of Koguryò’s founder, King Tongmyông, suggested that the legend must have been created in Koguryò, postdating the introduction of Buddhism into that kingdom via China during the late 4th century AD. From this Shiratori concluded that Tangun should not be included in early Korean history.

As regards Kija, historians such as Imanishi Ryû (1937) and Oda Shôgo (1927) proposed that his arrival in Korean peninsula at the time of late Shang was also merely a legendary account. Imanishi’s analysis was the most comprehensive, compiling all relevant ancient Chinese sources as well as Yi dynasty sources documenting Kija folklore and worship. His conclusion was that

Kija was a fabricated legend mostly having to do with Yi Sòng-gye's bid for dynastic legitimacy when he usurped the throne from the last Koryò king in a coup in 1388. The architect who masterminded this feat was a Neo-Confucian scholar named Chòng To-chòn (Han 1985), who proposed that the new dynasty be named "Chosòn" so that Yi could present himself as the true heir of the glories attributed to the Shang of antiquity.

Kija came to occupy a pivotal role in Yi dynasty identity discourse, which was fixated on their "ancestral" connection with China (Lee et al 1996: 221-239). In his essay on the "Legitimacy of the Three Han," Yi Ik wrote, for instance:

From long times past, Korea has been called a land of propriety, righteousness, humanity and wisdom. Whenever people talked about Korea, they referred to it as 'Little China,' and none of the Korea's neighbors ever challenged her rights to that appellation. So the fact that the rise and fall of dynastic fortunes in both countries resemble one another must be because they are both governed by the same principles" (Yi Ik, Sòngho Sasòl 38, author's translation in Lee et al. 1996: 225).

Yi dynasty intellectuals considered their country as the most civilized of all eastern countries (Tongguk), and they felt superior to the "barbarian" Manchus of the Qing dynasty, who ruled China from 1644-1911, despite the fact that they had to send annual tributary missions to the Qing court. Histories such as Haedong Yòksa by Han Ch'i-yun (1765-1814) and Tongsa Kangmok by An Chòng-bok (1712-1791) were therefore keen to establish a direct lineage to the more ancient periods in Chinese history via Kija (Han, Y. U 1989). But regardless of the historical validity of such constructions, what I want to emphasize here is that the Yi dynasty ancestral chronology had been framed in relation to that of the legendary emperors of China's most ancient past (Chang 1980), so that there existed no notion in traditional Korean historiography of what we now know as "prehistory." Pre-colonial Yi dynasty historians could only conceptualize the very ancient "Korean" past vis-à-vis "China" (Han, Y.U 1989: 145).

Once the legendary ancestors of the "Three Chosòn" were eradicated by Japanese historians, it was left to the archaeologists to replace them with the entirely new concept of a "prehistoric Korean civilization." A periodization of Korean prehistory was quickly established (Umehara 1925, 1926; Fujita 1948; Saitô 1943), with the principal periods designated as the

Neolithic (K. *sòkki sidae*/J. *sekki jidai*), Metallurgical period (K. *kumsòkki sidae*/J. *kinsekki jidai*), the time of the Lelang (K. *Nagnang*/J. *Rakurô*) commandery during the Han period, and the time of the Establishment of the Three Kingdoms (K. *Samguk Chôngnip*/J. *Sankoku seiritsu*). By the 1930's, following only two decades of systematic archaeological surveys and excavations (Pai 1994), Japanese scholars and museums had collected immense amounts of data to support their periodizations, including polished stone tools and knives, pottery, and bronze weapons, coming from dolmens, shell mounds, and mounded burials, and settlement sites. They categorized these remains as belonging to a newly discovered distinctive "Korean" cultural lineage (K. *munhwa kyet'ong*/J. *bunka keitô*). Archaeological research thus provided the main impetus for the formulation of the concept of a "prehistoric Korea" as the foundation of Korean civilization. This new orientation meant a radical departure from the earlier reliance on the traditional "Three Chosòn." Ch'oe Nam-sòn wrote in 1930 that without Japanese interest in prehistory, Koreans would never have investigated their own archaeological remains and historical documents, and he thanked the Japanese for showing the way (Ch'oe N. S. 1930: 21). He further added that the Koreans (J. *Chôsenjin*) should deplore their "racial" inadequacies for their previous ignorance.

It should be noted that the kinds of archaeological remains the Japanese scholars focused on in Korea were, for the most part, those with which they were already familiar from their studies of Japanese archaeology, such as comb-pattern pottery excavated from shell mounds, and bronze objects and comma-shaped jades (K. *kogok*/ J. *magatama*) from dolmen and "kofun" burials. Classified in terms of cultural assemblages, "Korean" artifacts and burial remains were cross-dated to similar remains in Japan, as well as in North China (Mikami 1961, 1966). As a consequence, the newly-discovered Korean prehistoric past was positioned geographically, culturally, and chronologically in the role of a middleman in the transmission of ancient continental culture to Japan (Fujita 1948).

RACIAL ORIGINS AND RACIAL DETERMINISM

Archaeological activities were also accompanied by intensive ethnographic research designed to support the colonial racial classification of the Koreans, Chinese, Mongols, and Manchus. One of the most popular fields then was anthropometry, the comparative study of human body measurements avidly promoted by anthropologists such as Torii Ryûzô (Torii 1904), Kubô Takeshi (1915) Shima Gorô (1938), as well as Satô Masayoshi and Kohama Mototsuga (1938). By the early 1940's, Japan's empire included the major port cities of China, all of Manchuria, the Korean peninsula, much of Southeast Asia and parts of the Pacific. The wealth of anthropological knowledge collected in these areas under wartime conditions is immense but has yet to be studied systematically.¹¹

Anthropological research into the Korean peninsula was widely supported and facilitated by prominent politicians, Chôsen Sotokufu (Governor General of Chôsen) bureaucrats, and scholars. The enthusiasm on the part of Japanese colonial administrators, intellectuals and scholars rested on the belief that fieldwork on the Koreans was indispensable to the study of Japanese culture and civilization (Yamaichi 1910: 1) and therefore of future benefit for the empire as whole. Around the time of the Annexation, "ethnological" accounts were mass-produced under the designation of "Chôsenjin Studies" (Yamaichi 1910), including extensive lists of the customs, religions, marriage rites, superstitions, local deities etc. of various Korean regions and cities (CSTF 1920, 1927). Following in the footsteps of that research, anthropometric studies reached a peak in the 1930s, exhaustively recording the Koreans' physical traits such as types of hair, skin color, body hair as well as measurements of skull size and shape, facial features, and body parts such as lengths of limbs. These quantitative statistic data were used to validate the common racial ancestry of the Japanese and Koreans (J. Nissen dôsonon).

¹¹ The reason for the lack of interest in such racial studies may be due to their taboo nature because of their association with the wartime research by the infamous Unit 731, linked to the development of biological and chemical warfare. Only in very recent years, medical officers, students, staff, and the relatives of victims who had been at strategically placed "medical concentration camps" in North China have emerged to tell their horrific tales of inhumanity and indescribable torture. This was suppressed for over fifty years in a systematic cover-up by the Japanese medical establishment and the postwar American occupation forces (Gold 1996).

Hypothetical claims for common Japanese-Korean racial origins somewhere in “prehistoric Manchuria” were touted throughout the era of colonial rule as the most potent historical/cultural argument for assimilation (J. dōka) policies that argued for the inclusion of Koreans as imperial subjects (J. tennō-ka) into Japan proper. The earliest references to the term “Nikkan” (Japanese-Korean) or “Kannichi” (Korean-Japanese) appear in the last two decades of late 19th century and into the 1910’s, coinciding with the heyday of Japanese expansion into Korea and Manchuria. Despite the popularity of their rhetoric, no one seems to have provided a convincing explanation of how the Japanese and Koreans were descended from one common race in Manchuria (Imanishi 1936: 36). The only consensus reached then, and which is still widely propagated today in some linguistic studies, is that they were descended from the same line of “Altaic” speakers, perhaps the Tungus, but had diverged in prehistoric times somewhere in a common region in Manchuria (J. Nikkan dōiki), after which time the Koreans migrated into Korea and the Japanese moved into the Japanese archipelago.

During the colonial period, the concept of “innate” racial characteristics (J. minzokusei) played a critical role in defining a nation’s past, social institutions, artistic achievements, customs, and even the future of its civilization. Japanese colonial publications argued that the “stagnant” nature and the overall “backwardness” of the Yi dynasty society (J. teitairon) were attributable to “the racial flaws of the Chōsenjin” propagated over the centuries by the conservative, authoritarian, and corrupt gentry class (yangban) (Wada 1950). The Japanese “Chōsenjin studies” published around the time of the annexation in 1910 promoted that their “civilizing mission” was necessary for the future racial improvement of the Koreans (Minzoku kaizō, kōzō). They predicted that under the guidance of a superior Japanese race with proper Japanese government, education and immersion in their culture it would eventually bring about racial change (CSTF 1920).

The idea that Japanese and Koreans shared blood, language, and cultural history in addition to “scientifically” measured physical traits was primarily directed at convincing Korean colonial subjects that their racial destiny would be tied to the future of the Japanese empire. It

was also targeted at Japanese citizens to encourage immigration to and investment in Korea and Manchuria (Eckert 1991). Therefore, during the early days of Japanese empire building in Northeast Asia, anthropologists, historians, and archaeologists played a pivotal role in providing the “racial/ historical” justifications for Korean annexation and the propagation of their colonial regime (Mishina and Murakami 1978; Hatada 1969; Yi, M.Y. 1976). Even prominent Japanese historians writing after the end of World War II claimed that the annexation and the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula were part of Korea’s destiny (Iwai 1950) — a destiny (J. shukumei) unavoidable due to geographic, historical, and environmental circumstances, since Korea had been surrounded by powerful neighbors since prehistoric times (Wada 1938).

RACIAL INVASIONS AND THE COLONIAL REGIME

In Japanese colonial scholarship, the most important catalyst for cultural, social, and technological change in the Korean peninsula was attributed to a series of racial invasions from the continent (Fujita 1948, 1952). Thus, the Korean peninsula became the destination of invasions, in late prehistory (7th-5th centuries BC), by Northern nomadic “Tungus,” who were equated with the Tongho (C. Donghu) and the Yemaek; these were followed by Wiman in 195-194 BC, the Han dynasty colonization of Lelang from 108 BC-313 AD, the imposition of “Yemaek-related” dynastic states such as Puyò, Koguryò, and Paekche during the Three Kingdoms period (1st-5th century AD), and a host of later military conquests by such powers as the Japanese (3rd-5th century), the Tang Chinese (7th century), the Mongols (13th century), the Japanese again under Hideyoshi (16th century) and the Manchus (17th century). All these prehistorically and historically “superior” races had consecutively imposed their colonial rule, absorbing and assimilating the earlier cultures (Fujita 1948; Mikami 1966; Wada 1950). Such assimilation of Koreans covering a span of more than two thousand years had eventually resulted in the weak and ineffectual Yi dynasty society. Colonial historical works also explained that the Koreans’ innate racial attitude of serving their bigger neighbors (K. sadae/ J. jidai) had bred “dependency” (J. taritsusei) on foreign regimes throughout the course of its history (Pai 1994).

They concluded that Korean civilization was “retarded,” that it had never fully developed, and that it had stagnated since its peak during the Three Kingdoms (Sekino 1932).

In the Japanese scheme of the development of Korean civilization, the main emphasis was placed on the Han commandery of Lelang (Sekino 1925; Pai 1989, 1992), which Fujita Ryôtsaku (1948) called the “Lighthouse of the East.” The Japanese archaeologists’ fascination with how Han Chinese civilization was transferred through Korea to Japan inspired two decades of excavation, documenting more than two thousand graves in and around P’yôngyang (Sekino 1925). The site of Lelang, in addition to its great potential as a treasure trove of Han grave goods that had never been seen outside of China, confirmed the colonial Japanese historians’ two historical assumptions for explaining the shift in hegemony in 20th century Northeast Asia: (1) China in the past was great but like Korea had also declined steadily until the 20th century; and (2) the achievements of the Han civilization filtered through Korea were instrumental in Japanese state formation. It was only a small step to reach the political conclusion that, having inherited the past achievements of ancient China, Japan was now called on to rule China.¹²

Such uses of scholarship for the self-serving justification of the Japanese colonial regime incited the most vehement anti-Japanese rhetoric on the part of postcolonial nationalist Korean historians (Hong 1949; YSHH 1973). Since independence from Japan in 1945, Korean historians have consistently denounced Japanese historians as “imperialistic collaborators” (K. Ilche ôyonghakja) for having distorted the Korean past (K. Hanguksa oegok) in their attempts to deprive them of their racial identity (K. minjok malsal) (Yi, M.Y. 1976). These explicitly anti-Japanese historical writings were aimed at rewriting Korean history as being driven by the spirit of Korean self-reliance (K. chuch’e) and racial independence (K. Chosôn chôngshin). South Korean nationalist historiography remains consumed with narratives of “national resistance” (K. Hanguk minjok t’ujaengsa). In such nationalist narratives, what the Japanese colonial scholars

¹² The sensational discovery, in 1884, of the Koguryô Kwanggaet’o Wang stele near Ji’an in Jilin, China (Saeki 1974), and its inscribed records of Wa (“Japanese”) invasions was also interpreted as validating the Japanese military victories in the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war (Shiratori 1986).

referred to as racial invasions are now presented as “historical turning points” — as locations (cf. Bhabha 1994) of “national resistance” against “foreign” aggressors going as far back in time as the Han dynasty “colonists” (Pai 1989). Predictably, the most exulted national hero in South Korea today is admiral Yi Sun-shin (1545-1598), Korea’s Lord Nelson, who saved the nation from the evil clutches of the invading Japanese.

Although nationalist historians, in strict opposition to the above-mentioned colonial dependence schemes, came consistently to interpret developments in Korea as propelled by “racial independence,” they nonetheless continued to accept the opposition of the “foreign” vs. “indigenous” elements in Korean cultural history as identified by the early Japanese scholars. This led to a succession of identity crises, the biggest of which occurred in connection with so-called “Chinese” influences; for in contrast to their Confucian predecessors (Deuchler 1992), the new generation of Korean intellectuals who had been born, raised, and educated under Japanese colonial rule (Cho, Y. M. 1964), no longer wanted to acknowledge their ancestral and cultural links to China, which they had been taught (by their Japanese colonial masters) to be a “backward” and “feudal” place. Their rejection of their Chinese heritage shows how much they had internalized the Japanese historical argument that Koreans had been incapable of independent evolution because of their sadae attitude that had worshipped all Chinese imports, whether in art, culture, literature, or government. The Japanese-invented concept of sadae became a negative racial trait par excellence, and even in contemporary usage, the term has become a blanket derogatory designation of anyone dealing with foreign connections.

The first generation of post-colonial ancient historians, such as Yi Pyòng-do (1981), Kim Ch’òl-jun (1964), and Lee Ki-baek (1984), earned their reputations for focusing on independent “Korean” state formation based on indigenous ethnic origins (minjok kukka kiwòn). In presenting themselves as spokesmen for a new kind of Korean racial histories, they chiefly appealed to patriotic sentiments. First, they would attack the Japanese scholars such as Imanishi (1936, 1937) as utterly lacking objectivity and harboring “anti-Korean” motives, because they

had excluded Tangun and Kija as “legendary” and Wiman as “Chinese” (Kim, C.J. 1964; Yi, P.D. 1981a). They then proceeded to reinterpret the alleged “Chinese” connections of Tangun, Kija, and Wiman. The latter two figures, in particular, needed to be cleared of any possible suspicion of having established “colonial regimes,” since their Korean origins had to be “pure” and must not be contaminated by “foreign” elements.¹³ In the process of the “ethnic transformation” of the “Three Chosòn” from “Chinese” to “Korean” ancestors, they were classified as belonging to a “Tongi lineage” (K. Tongi kyet’ong), which was in turn synonymous with the concept of the “Tongi cultural sphere” (K. Tongijok Munhwakwòn) (Yi, K.B. and Yi, K.D. 1983: 49). The territorial boundaries of this “Tongi culture” were drawn to encompass all the Chinese Northeast, including the Shandong peninsula, the provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang. The “Tongi culture” was designed to overlap in time and space with the first Korean state of Kochosòn (*Ibid.* 51), established in 2333 BC by Tangun, who was placed at the beginning of all history textbooks as the founder of the Korean race.¹⁴

Even the most cursory comparison with the 19th- and 20th-century Russian and Japanese ethnographies immediately shows that the territory of the supposed “Tongi cultural sphere” and the Kochosòn (Tangun Chosòn) state neatly (and by no means accidentally) coincides with what

¹³ The nationalist “Korean racial state” synthesis also manifests itself in the current official name of the Republic of Korea, which goes back to the Bronze Age. The founding fathers of South Korea deliberately abandoned the old name of Chosòn — used by the Yi dynasty, the Japanese colonial government, and still to this day by North Korea — and chose “Hanguk,” which derives from the time of Weiman, when Chunwang fled south and established himself as the King of the Han in the area known as the Three Han (Samhan). In naming itself, in 1948, “Taehan Minguk” (Republic of the Great Race of the Han), South Korea not only distinguished itself from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (Chosòn Minjujuì Inmin Konghwaguk) in the North, but additionally staked its claim to be the rightful descendant of the purely “Korean” Three Han that were historically situated in the southern part of the peninsula.

¹⁴ In North Korea, the political propaganda machine fanning Kim Il-sòng’s son and successor Kim Chòng-il has conducted a radical revision of the “prehistoric” past that had previously been reconstructed to locate the origins of the “Kochosòn” and ancient Korea in Manchuria (SHK 1976). Now the Kochosòn-Liaodong connection has been rejected as a past mistake of a pro-Chinese (*sadae*) attitude, and Kochosòn has been relocated to P’yòngyang (RSPJ 1994: 17). The dynastic succession of the Kims was prehistorically validated by the “rediscovery,” “excavation,” and subsequent colossal reconstruction of the alleged tomb of Tangun (probably a much later Koguryô tumulus) outside of P’yòngyang.

the earlier scholars had defined as the prehistoric realm of the “Tungus” and “Paleo-Asiatics” (Kim, C.B. 1976). This link is actually made explicit in numerous current archaeological and historical works, where the ancestral Koreans are presented as being directly descended from Paleo-Asiatics by way of the Tungus and the Tongi/ Yemaek (Yi, C.U. 1993), all of whom can trace their indigenous origins in Manchuria, from whence they eventually migrated south into the Korean peninsula. Thus, contemporary Korean nationalist historians have remained faithful to the Japanese colonial scholars’ identification of “China” as the “Other,” in opposition to the indigenous “Tongi” inhabitants of Manchuria and Korea. This Japanese historical construction is directly responsible for the post-colonial separation of “Korean” history from its earlier roots in Chinese historiography.

ENDURING JAPANESE — KOREAN PARALLELISMS

What is most striking in the nationalist construction of Korean origins outlined above is that the postcolonial historians have flagrantly duplicated the ideology, methodology, and terminology that originated with Japanese colonial anthropology more than a century ago — in spite of all contrary claims of “Korean racial independence.” This occurred because Korean historians and archaeologists still believe in concepts such as the “hierarchy of races” and the continuity of all “indigenous” races since prehistoric times. As a result, their nationalist narrative converged upon the same hypothetical primitive, prehistoric, indigenous entities — the “Paleo-Asiatics,” “Tungus,” and “Koreans” — that had been classified by Japanese scholars. Current Korean racial classifications still rely on that early 20th century methodology of Japanese making, which, aiming foremost to legitimize Japanese control over Manchuria by claiming that it had always been politically and historically divorced from China, did not find it convenient or necessary to discriminate between ethnic groups, tribes, cultural lineages, culture spheres, racial migration routes, and territorial nations. In a supreme irony, the geographical boundaries of the

Koreans' imagined "homelands" of today (Anderson 1993) cover exactly the same regions as the former Japanese colonial empire in Northeast Asia (Myers and Peattie 1984).

The situation is interestingly parallel in Japan. Overshadowed by the shared cultural and historical experience of colonial racism (Pai 1994), the century-old debate on prehistoric crossings between Korea and Japan has produced an uncountable number of popular as well as academic works. Current Japanese studies seeking to explain the nature of Japanese culture (J. Nihon Bunkaron) (Yoshino 1992) cannot begin to attempt to explain their imperial and racial origins without referring to ancient Korean connections. Under present-day social realities, on the other hand, the Japanese Imperial family would be the last to admit its descent from Koreans, who, in Japan, are still commonly regarded as "backward" and "inferior" to the Japanese. Analogous to that of South Koreans vis-à-vis China, this contradiction-ridden identity crisis of postwar Japan is derived from the two countries' colonial experience.

The above-mentioned pioneer scholars such as Shiratori Kurakichi, Torii Ryûzô, and Sekino Tadashi, were simultaneously the founding fathers of Japanese national history (kokushi), Japanese anthropology, and Japanese art and architectural history, who defined the discipline of Oriental Studies (Tanaka 1993). Their explanations of the origins of Japanese civilization were designed to integrate Korea, Manchuria, China, and Inner Asia. Consequently, from the early 20th century onward, Korean history, or "Chôsen-shi" (J.), was regarded as part of the "history of the one and only Japanese state" (J. ikkokushi) (Mishina and Murakami 1978; Imanishi 1936). This inclusive approach is evident when we read the early Japanese scholars' works (e.g. Tsuda 1913; Imanishi 1936; Torii 1976; Sekino 1904, 1932; Imamura 1914): for regardless to which discipline they pertain, they never fail to mention how some aspect of their findings from their Korean research reminds them of something similar in Japan. This penchant for incessant cultural comparison arose from their belief that their investigation into the Korean peninsula (which they had assumed had not evolved much during the last thousand years) would reveal remnants of "ancient" or "original" forms (Mishina 1962: 132) of past Japanese culture. They were especially preoccupied with the culture and history of the Three Kingdoms, because the

Buddhist remains from that period reminded them of Asuka and Nara in Japan (Sekino 1938). In this way, ancient Korea was seamlessly incorporated into the narrative of Japanese cultural origins that focused on the role of immigrants (J. toraijin or kiwajin) who had arrived from the continent (Saitô 1981).

Among all the prehistoric invasions into Korea that spilled over into Japan, the early 20th-century scholars were most captivated by the possible connections with the Tungus — Yemaek — Puyò — Koguryò sequence because of their fascination with nomadic (or semi-nomadic) cultures and their “imperial” traditions of conquest (Ikeuchi 1951; Shiratori 1986). They were on the lookout for conquest regimes resembling their notions of horse-riding warriors (read Samurai) (Egami 1964). In the 1930’s, this interest spurred the archaeological search for Japanese “imperial” origins all the way to the Ordos region of Mongolia in the search for Xiongnu tombs, and to the Tarim Basin along the Silk Road. The depiction of successive racial invasions and conquests that brought “high culture” from the north (Inner Asia) through the Korean peninsula to reach Japan is still widely propagated in Japanese studies.

That the pioneering agenda of 19th century Japanese anthropologists, archaeologists, and ancient historians in their search for “Japanese origins” (Ikawa-Smith 1981) remain alive and well in contemporary Japanese anthropological discourse is well exemplified by the synthesis of Japanese anthropology published in celebration of the centennial of the Anthropological Society of Japan (Jinruigaku Gakkai) (NJRJG 1984). This sumptuous volume highlights such topics as the origins of Japanese, the historical significance of the discovery of the Jômon culture, the environment of the Jômon culture, prehistoric diet, the migration of Yayoi people from the continent, skull measurements documenting the transition from Jômon to Yayoi in Kyûshû, the physical characteristics of the Japanese, etc. That little has changed since the time of the early pioneers is also evidenced by the fact that the Yayoi and Kofun periods remain the favorite foci of archaeological research in Japan — the very periods when influx from the continent is supposed to have been heaviest. Discoveries from those periods attract a wide audience, and media interest is tremendous whenever the excavation of yet another Yamato site gets underway.

Concomitantly, art historians and ancient historians are frequent participants at talk shows, and their theories sometimes make sensational and controversial news (Takahashi and Amano 1988). The underlying reason, of course, is that throughout the past century, beginning with the Meiji era (1868-1912), Japanese modernity and sense of nationhood (Gluck 1985) have been critically tied to historical interpretations of the “Japanese” Imperial lineage.

In conclusion, I should like to offer my suggestions for resolving the century-old debate on the ethnic origins of the current nation states of the Republic of Korea and Japan. First of all, scholars on both sides of the Straits of Tsushima should acknowledge that the classifications of prehistoric races in Northeast Asia were essentially colonial constructs dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Secondly, they should avoid as much as possible the indiscriminate “ethnic” labeling of prehistoric archaeological sites and artifacts based on the present geographic locations of their finds. This is because, in prehistoric as well as more recent historical times, the regions of Inner Asia, Siberia, Northeast China, and the Korean peninsula have always been the locus of multiethnic and multicultural “contact zones” for a variety of tribes, nomadic or seminomadic states, and even centrally organized empires; and those entities are not easily identifiable as direct precursors of one or the other of the presently-existing nations. Furthermore, scholars should realize that if they continue to assert monolithic archaeological models for the formation of their own nations such as the Han Chinese, Koreans, or the Japanese, then their theories will inevitably continue to be abused by non-scholars to claim possession over neighboring countries’ territories as long-lost ancestral homelands. I believe that it is long overdue that archaeologists should recognize the powerful impact they have had in erecting contemporary political and psychological barriers that continue to hinder collaborative archaeological and historical research. In my opinion, joint excavations in an atmosphere free of national prejudice will be the only viable means to overcome the intellectual restrictions currently imposed by the national borders demarcated after World War II.

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