

Diagnosing and Debunking Korean Pseudohistory

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Abstract

In current day South Korea pseudohistory pertaining to early Korea and northern East Asia has reached epidemic proportions. Its advocates argue the early state of Chosŏn to have been an expansive empire centered on mainland geographical Manchuria. Through rationalizing interpretations of the traditional Hwan'ung-Tan'gun myth, they project back the supposed antiquity and pristine nature of this charter empire to the archaeological Hongshan Culture of the Neolithic straddling Inner Mongolia and Liaoning provinces of China.

Despite these blatant spatial and temporal exaggerations, all but specialists of early Korea typically remain hesitant to explicitly label this conceptualization as “pseudohistory.” This is because advocates of ancient empire cast themselves as rationalist scholars and claim to have evidential arguments drawn from multiple textual sources and archaeology. They further wield an emotive polemic defaming the domestic academic establishment as being composed of national traitors bent only on maintaining a “colonial view of history.” The canon of counterevidence relied on by empire advocates is the accumulated product of 20th century revisionist and pseudo historiography, but to willing believers and non-experts, it can easily appear convincing and overwhelming. Combined with a postcolonial nationalist framing and situated against the ongoing historiography dispute with China, their conceptualization of a grand antiquity has gained bipartisan political influence with concrete ramifications for professional scholarship.

This paper seeks to introduce and debunk the core, seemingly evidential, canon of arguments put forward by purveyors of Korean pseudohistory and to

expose their polemics, situating the phenomenon in a broader diagnostic context of global pseudohistory and archaeology.

Keywords: Korean History, Academic Disputes, South Korea, Pseudohistory, Mythologies

Introduction

To scholars working on early Korea, the phenomenon of pseudohistory is well known. During 2014–15 it reached a crisis point. Under the sway of the argumentation of pseudohistorians a subgroup of the National Assembly named “the special committee for counter policies concerning distortions in Northeast Asian history,” forced the government’s own Northeast Asia History Foundation to terminate funding for two flagship projects, the Harvard-based Early Korea Project (2006–2017), and a Korea-based digital historical atlas project (2008–2015).¹ Korean pseudohistorians argue that professionally trained scholars promote a continuation of Japanese era colonial historiography that seeks to diminish the supposed grandeur of early Korea, both in terms of territory and antiquity, and that establishment historians are consequently hiding the truth of ancient Korean ancestors having ruled an expansive continental empire bequeathing civilization to greater northern East Asia.

This vision of ancient empire is built on a series of flawed arguments—textual, linguistic, archaeological and folkloristic—the evolution of which can be reconstructed as a history of ideas, tracing back through the 20th century to pre-20th century antecedents.² It can principally be understood as a revisionist discourse characterized by a combination of historical negationism and chauvinism that emerged in reaction to the Japanese takeover of Korea in the early 20th century. Today it remains situated at the intersection of 1) calls for ethnic revitalization still framed against the colonial experience (1910–1945), 2) desire for unification of the Korean nation, 3) new religions, and 4) a sense of marginalized “Korean” identity stemming from foreign cultural hegemonies and globalization. From this perspective, pseudohistory may be contextualized as a distinct sociological phenomenon in its own right, however, from the perspective of critical professional history and archaeology pertaining to early Korea and geographical Manchuria, such approaches should not detract from a clear appreciation that the basic argumentation and content of this “alternative” or “grand history” is both factually wrong and methodologically flawed.

Beyond the small world of Early Koreanists, resistance to the admittedly derogatory label of “pseudohistory” is readily encountered. Those to be referred to as pseudohistorians in this paper purport to have a body of textual evidence supporting their assertions, and to lay observers this easily appears convincing. Korean pseudohistory dominates the popular publishing industry, such that it is hard to believe so many books could be published if there were not some truth in their arguments.³ In addition, pseudohistorians frame their vision against both the memory of Japanese colonialism, and the ongoing history dispute with China over jurisdiction of the heritage of Koguryō (c.1st century BCE–668 CE) and Parhae (698–926), thus exploiting postcolonial sentiments pertaining to emotively charged topics of public discourse instilled into the national consciousness at schools and through national media.⁴

The aim of this paper is not to persuade true believers, but to provide an overview of the canon of topics and arguments Korean pseudohistorians constantly recycle, and to expose the fallacies of their methods and evidence. This will demonstrate that Korean pseudohistory is not merely a misinformed or folksy alternative view of the past, but genuinely pseudoscientific in nature. With this aim in mind, and in view of space limitations, this paper takes a synchronic approach focusing on the arguments and evidence, and only referencing the contextual history of their development when necessary. It also seeks to show that what may be presented as ostensibly secular and evidentialist arguments are closely intertwined with more extreme premises and irrational imaginings to which the same pseudo scholars are often sympathetic, when not themselves active proselytizers.

Korean Pseudohistory: A Brief Diagnosis

Pseudohistory is a phenomenon far from unique only to Korea, and Korean idioms have been in contact with external ideas throughout the 20th century. From the mid 1910s during the formative period of Korean revisionist history, various ideas were introduced from contemporary Western scholarship including the Ural-Altaic language hypothesis, diffusionism and folkloristics; in post-liberation South Korea more explicitly pseudoscientific notions of lost civilizations and continents have further been incorporated. However, in addition to these direct connections, current day Korean pseudohistory shares other analogous traits to world pseudo-histories, particularly in terms of methodology and rhetorical strategies.

In response to the 2014–2015 crisis, referred to above, since 2016 a new generation of Korean historians has emerged, publishing vigorous critiques through journals and mass media. In an edited book collating their first articles and published

under the name of the “Young Historians” (젊은역사학자모임), Ki Kyoung-ryang (Ki Kyōngnyang) observes that the practice of Korean pseudohistory matches definitions pertaining to Western pseudohistory given by Fritze in *Invented Knowledge: False History, Fake Science and Pseudo-religions*.⁵ Ki reduces these to the following six core points, to which following a semi-colon, I append the most immediate examples from Korean pseudohistory, to be discussed throughout this paper:

1. Approaching a topic with preconceptions and a hidden agenda; presumption of an ancient Korean empire.
2. Cherry-picking evidence to support a theory while ignoring evidence to the contrary; uncritical usage of later, distorted sources for historical geography over earlier sources.
3. Making use of outdated scholarship which has since been disproven; the Ural-Altaic language hypothesis, diffusionism, and evoking the accumulated lineage of 20th century pseudohistory.
4. Interpreting myths and legends as historical; rationalization of the Hwan'ung-Tan'gun foundation story.
5. Legalistic argumentation that fails to distinguish between remote possibility and actual likelihood of a given scenario having occurred; reliance on aberrant toponyms as concrete evidence for locating early polities, and arguing for theoretically possible but unlikely long-range migrations.
6. Disputing basic facts such as whether a historical event even occurred or not; questioning the success of 109–108 BCE Han invasion, the location of the Han commanderies and separately of the Samhan polities, and reorienting the locations of Liaodong and Liaoxi.

Fritze's definitions are based on those of Fagan's (2006) *Archaeological Fantasies: How Pseudoarchaeology Misrepresents the Past and Misleads the Present*, from whom we can add:

7. Disparaging academia; accusing the establishment of promoting “colonial historiography.”
8. But conversely, appealing to academic authority from other fields; flawed evidentialism, utilization of archaeology, as well as astronomy.
9. Obsession with esoterica (myths, writing systems); assertion of a proto-religio-philosophy and ancient vernacular script.
10. Expectation of a reward at quest's end; proven ancient empire.⁶

To briefly elaborate points 1 and 10, on the former, Fritze suggests an underlying hidden agenda for current day authors of pseudoscience is to make money from their books. In Korea this can only be a secondary motivation for the most prolific writers, namely Yi Tögil, and possibly in the case of *Hwandang kogi* derived sales for the Chüngsando Sangsaeng organization. The not-so-hidden agenda of Korean empire advocates is clearly political, as demonstrated by the National Assembly hearings, the underlying networks that enabled those hearings, and lobbying activities concerning history textbook content. If there is a genuinely hidden agenda to Korean pseudohistory, it is rather in the quasi-religious aspect promoting worship of Tan'gun as inherited from the 20th century new religion of Taejonggyo (est. 1909); in this case the ostensibly rationalist evidentialism may be understood to constitute a form of religious apologetism.

As for a promise of reward to the reader at quest's end, to Fritze this is the empty snake-oil of decoding "pyramid-derived knowledge of cometary impacts." However, in the highly charged context of Northeast Asian geopolitics, the reward for proving an ancient Korean civilization has multiple functions. More tempered criticisms of Korean pseudohistory, usually aimed at the consumer than the creators, speculate on the cathartic value provided in the discovery—or reaffirmation—that ancient Korea was a grander place than early China or Japan had been, thus compensating for Korea's later self-subordination to Central Plain culture and the 20th century ethnic traumas of colonialism and division. Still more reassuring, if early examples of "colonial occupation" such as the Chinese Lelang commandery (108 BCE—c.313 CE) could be proven false, then this would provide further evidence for the illegitimacy of 20th century annexation to Japan, and serve to rebuff China's recent claims to have historically ruled the northern half of the Korean peninsula. Further, if Chosön is established as having been the charter state of Manchuria, then the historical continental conquest territory of Koguryö can be argued to be legitimately "Korean" bolstering Korean claims to ethnic jurisdiction over Koguryö heritage in China. Indeed through this model, Koguryö's historical expansion of the 4th century—that saw the overthrow of the Xuantu and Lelang commanderies, occupation of Liaodong to the west and annexation of Puyö (c.2nd century BCE—346 CE) to the north—can be presented, not as aggressive conquest, but as a restoration movement to reclaim Korea's supposed charter territory. The logical conclusion to such arguments, and final reward, is a boost to current day irredentism: if ancient Korea can be proven to have possessed a continental empire, then not only are China's claims to Koguryö void, but Korea—especially if unified—may still have legitimate claim to Manchuria.

Parallel Postcolonial Pseudohistories: India and Korea

In addition to the more generalizing definitions given above, Korean pseudo-history displays characteristics analogous to that of other postcolonial nations. If, for example, we compare the phenomena of pseudohistory in Korea and India, two otherwise differing states with largely unconnected histories, we can identify certain further parallels.⁷

Firstly, in both cases pseudohistory was born of nationalist reaction to being colonized; they were forged under the conditions of colonial rule including the introduction of Western “rationalism” and sciences such as linguistics and archaeology, which were seemingly wielded to legitimate colonial rule. In order to engage and reject the content, colonized historians had to adopt the discursive practices and methodologies of the colonizers and seek to revise them to their home advantage.

Secondly, these revisionist histories take as a primary premise the opinion that contemporary colonial historiography was not only a misuse of known history, but was *factually* wrong. They are particularly concerned with notions of invasion: for India this remains the question of Aryan invasion; for Korea the 108 BCE Chinese commanderies and the question of Japanese Mimana. If the colonial historiography is wrong, then an alternative—ideally the opposite—must be true: even before looking for evidence, this leads to the conclusion that if articles of civilization were not introduced from outside, then the countries in question must have been generators of their own indigenous culture; if they were not invaded, then they must have expanded and invaded surrounding territories themselves.

Narratives of exclusive indigenous development are in turn substantiated by identifying supposedly continuous cultural traditions, tracing down from a pristine golden age to the present. In Indian pseudohistory, this is the *Hindutva* tradition. In Korea various idioms exist, such as Park or diachronic narratives of the *hwarang* martial order that premise the transmission of a Korean religio-philosophy, but all derive popular authority from their linkage to Tan’gun and all incorporate notions of sky worship. Proposing early empire in place of being invaded, revisionist defences against imperial chauvinism respond with their own “subaltern chauvinism.” While the Indian landmass is large enough to constitute continental empire in and of itself, Korean pseudohistory looks to Manchuria and evokes wider “Dongyi” and “pan-Altaic” chauvinisms, discussed below.

It should be stressed that this reverse chauvinism is no more gratuitous than that of imperial powers, but is a distinct variant. However, revisionist rollback takes on its own momentum; the search for a pristine early empire leads to claims of regional, or even global, proto-civilization to which even more fantastic notions

of lost civilizations, submerged continents and landbridges are further adjoined. However, because the initial logic has extended from proving colonial historiography wrong and providing an alternative, even the more modest schemes of indigenous empire necessarily remain premised on the notion of an opposing colonial historiography. Thus conspiracy theories in Indian and Korean pseudo-history continue to be framed in postcolonial nationalist term. This, in turn, imbues them with greater political valency than is available to their current day Western analogues and this leads into a final shared characteristic.

While Western pseudo-history is typically regarded as an amateur fringe pursuit self-funded through royalties of book sales and increasingly social-media, postcolonial pseudo-history such as in Korea and India influences mainstream discourses and enjoys a higher level of institutional and governmental support. Governments of states liberated from colonialism similarly legitimize themselves in opposition to the colonial regimes they replace; they thus utilize narratives of colonial resistance, to which revisionist patriotic historiography is highly congenial. In India, *Hindutva* informs political nationalism while Korea has now witnessed the defunding of major projects through allegations of colonial historiography by those advocating the notion of Old Chosŏn as an ancient empire. Before turning to the details of this empire, it is useful to highlight two flawed conceptual premises that underlie Korean pseudo-history which I label “Dongyi conflationism,” and the “Altaic fallacy.”

Ethnic Dongyi Conflationism and the Altaic Fallacy

Dongyi (東夷 K. Tong’i “eastern barbarian”) and equivalent labels occur throughout pre 20th century Chinese sources to refer to surrounding “non-Chinese” peoples, including those of the Korean peninsula. In the pre-Qin period, Dongyi referred to people immediately east of the Central Plain state of Zhou (1045–256 BCE), broadly in the region of the Shandong peninsula.⁸ These Dongyi—also referred to as the Nine Yi (九夷)—were ultimately absorbed into a broader Central Plain identity and became an integral part of early Chinese historiography with several culture heroes identified as Dongyi in early canonical texts. However, following the Qin unification and territorial expansion under the Qin and Han empires, the Dongyi label was reused for previously unknown peoples newly encountered in geographical Manchuria, the Korean peninsula and Japanese isles, such that from *Sanguozhi* (completed 280 CE, covering 221–280) and *Hou Hanshu* (compiled 3rd–mid 5th century, covering 25–220) onwards, descriptions of continental Manchurian and Korean peninsular polities are located in “Dongyi treatise” chapters of the official Chinese histories.⁹

During the medieval period (c.8th–13th centuries), with the adoption of Confucianism and through the Kija (箕子) tradition, discussed below, peninsular Koreans came to positively self-identify as “civilized Dongyi” and found their purported ancestors in the pre-Qin sources. This conflation of the ancient Dongyi of Shandong with later Dongyi of Manchuria and Korea continues to be employed within current day Korean pseudohistory in order to lay claim to a pan “Dongyi civilization” of which Koreans are chief inheritors. While the Kija legend utilized the Dongyi conflation to claim the transmission of classical civilization to Korea, pseudohistorians today either reverse this claim, asserting classical Chinese culture to have been a product of Dongyi Chosŏn civilization, or they distinguish Dongyi identity as antithetical to China, embracing rather the non-Chinese “barbarian” aspect of the dichotomy.¹⁰

In 20th century revisionist Korean historiography, Dongyi identity has been further married to the late 19th century Ural-Altai language hypothesis, which premises a shared ethnolinguistic commonality among the peoples of the Eurasian steppe. During the 19th century this hypothesis initially premised a linguistic homeland in the Altai region of Central Asia, but by the 1930s, the group of Uralic languages, principally located to the west, were regarded as a separate family.¹¹ Consequently the proposed point of expansion for the remaining non-Uralic languages was placed in western Manchuria, however, despite the shift in location, they maintained the evocative but thereafter misleading moniker of “Altaic.” From west to east, the “core Altaic” language groups are Turkic, Mongolic and Tungusic; in “macro Altaic” schemes, Koreanic and Japonic are secondarily incorporated to the east. The Manchurian peoples labelled as Dongyi in post-Qin sources would principally have included speakers of Tungusic, Koreanic and Japonic, as well as non-Altaic language groups such as Amuric.¹² Thus, the Altaic premise both supports the notion of a common Dongyi identity across Manchuria, and further expands it to incorporate historical northern steppe peoples, such as the Xiongnu, Khitan and Mongols, not previously classified as Dongyi.

Included in post-liberation school textbooks, the notion of an Altaic identity has permeated Korean society. It is usually invoked in Korean pseudohistory and popular imaginings fossilized in its pre-1930s’ form to support theories of long-range migration out of Central Asia. More critical, however, is that the hypothesis itself has failed to be substantiated in a manner comparable to other established language families.¹³ Current consensus opinion is that the constituent Altaic language groups are not, in historical linguistic terms, genetically related. As a consequence, although there has clearly been a real contact resulting in a “trans-Eurasian” continuum of typological similarities and lexical borrowings, there can be no common ancestral proto-Altaic language, and therefore no proto people or

civilization associated with speaking it.¹⁴ Assumptions of ethno-linguistic affinity between historically Korean speaking peoples and any other Dongyi or steppe people, even within Manchuria, therefore become void, though, just as in the case of areal typologies, this is not to deny cultural transmissions.

It is safe to say that nearly all pseudohistory pertaining to early Korea and northern Asia utilizes Dongyi conflationism and Altaic affiliation as underlying, if not explicit, premises. All further take an interest in the polity of Chosŏn (c.3rd century BCE–108 BCE) as the charter state of Korean history. This has been the case from the first generation of revisionist scholars, that include Kim Kyohŏn (1868–1923), Sin Ch'aeho (1880–1936) and Ch'oe Namsŏn (1890–1957).¹⁵

Today we can locate individually authored schemes on an interpretative continuum between those emphasizing Altaic connections and a search for origins in Central Asia, and those that focus on aggrandizing Chosŏn as the source of northern East Asian civilization. These schemes differ only in emphasis but writers associated with the latter category include those most efficacious in concomitantly promoting the colonial historiography polemic and who devote most energies to delineating the territory of their imagined “charter empire.”¹⁶

The Problem of (Old) Chosŏn as the Charter State

The notion of Chosŏn as the charter state of Korea appeared in peninsular sources from the late 13th century, starting with *Samguk yusa* (“Remaining records of the Three Kingdoms” c.1283) and *Chewang ungi* (“Rhyming record of [Chinese] emperors and [Korean] kings” c.1287), and was utilized as a core aspect of the Chosŏn dynasty’s (1392–1910) historical identity. This same notion of Old Chosŏn being the “first state of Korean history” is maintained today in official and popular historiography of both North and South Korea.

Earliest Chinese sources reliably attesting Chosŏn include the *Shiji* (87 BCE), *Hanshu* (76 CE) and *Sanguozhi*. They principally attest the following facts: the state of Chosŏn was in existence during the Warring States period as the eastern neighbour to Yan; around 280 BCE Chosŏn lost a swathe of territory as Yan expanded eastwards establishing five commanderies; around 195 BCE a high ranking refugee from Yan named (Wi) Man (衛滿) was given refuge and control of Chosŏn’s western frontier—the western border being delineated by the P’ae (溟水 Ch. Pei) River—from which he soon acquired an army and usurped the Chosŏn throne around 128 BCE, Ye lord Namnyŏ (南閻) defected to Han China triggering the first Han invasion attempt and establishment of a shortlived commandery; from 109–108 BCE Han China led a punitive conquest against the usurped Chosŏn polity, by then under third generation rule, resulting in its overthrow and replacement

with four new commanderies east of those Han had inherited from Yan, and around 82 BCE, the four commanderies were consolidated as two, Lelang and Xuantu. According to these sources, there is only one Chosŏn state, with the last century of its existence under the rule of the Wi Man dynasty.

The same Chinese sources also introduce an ahistorical legend. This asserts that prior to the usurpation by Wi Man, the Chosŏn royal line traced their lineage to the personage of Jizi (K. Kija “Marquis of Ji”), a royal sage of Shang (c.1554–1046 BCE) who came to Chosŏn following the Zhou conquest of Shang and introduced articles of civilization including agriculture and laws. Jizi is a culture hero first attested in *Shangshu* (Book of Documents), wherein he transmits the tenets of Shang civilization to Zhou. However, his association with Chosŏn and going to rule there appear only from *Shiji* and *Hanshu*. The evolution of the Jizi story is thus explainable as Han period political propaganda developed to legitimize the punitive conquest and imposition of commandery rule. However, association with Jizi also had the attendant effect of extending Chosŏn’s supposed known antiquity from 3rd century BCE back to the 11th century Shang-Zhou transition.

As is well known among specialists, pre-20th century Korean orthodox historiography distinguished three sub-periods of their charter state of Chosŏn: Tan’gun Chosŏn, Kija Chosŏn and Wiman Chosŏn. The earliest period, that of Tan’gun Chosŏn, Kija Chosŏn and Wiman Chosŏn. The earliest period, that of Tan’gun Chosŏn, is unattested in Chinese sources and is a peninsular Korean innovation of the 13th century, as is the term Old Chosŏn (古朝鮮), both being first attested in *Samguk yusa*. As during the Chosŏn dynasty itself, in current day surveys of Korean history, the moniker “Old Chosŏn” remains a useful term in order to distinguish the early historical polity in question from the later Yi dynasty state of Chosŏn (1392–1910), a name that continued to be used during the colonial era and in North Korea still today. However, in the context of popular and pseudohistory this notion of Old Chosŏn is highly problematic as it serves to obfuscate the distinction between the historical periods of Wiman, and pre-Wiman Warring States era Chosŏn, and the ahistorical periods of Tan’gun and Kija.

Revisionist and pseudohistorians reject the period of Kija Chosŏn, but tend to allow for the historicity of a Kija ruled polity, locating it outside of the Korean peninsula. By contrast, however, they embrace the Tan’gun period as the true Old Chosŏn and object of their aggrandizing schemes.¹⁷ Indeed, as it first occurred in *Samguk yusa*, in which Old Chosŏn explicitly refers to the section covering the Hwan’ung-Tan’gun foundation story, to which mention of Kija is appended; it thus serves to distinguish these “old” periods from Wiman Chosŏn. *Chewang ungi* makes a variant distinction terming the Tan’gun period simply as Chosŏn, and grouping Kija and Wiman as “Later Chosŏn.” During the Chosŏn dynasty period,

Wiman Chosŏn was recognized as historical but regarded as illegitimate, with the line of legitimate dynastic rule (*chŏngt'ong* 正統) flowing from Tan'gun and Kija Chosŏn to the Samhan (三韓) states and thence to Silla and Koryŏ; the legitimate Chosŏn periods were Tan'gun and Kija.

From the 20th century until the present, with Kija diminished or negated, the popular notion of Chosŏn has remained inexorably linked to Tan'gun. For example, the common trope of Korea possessing a 5,000 year history refers to the orthodox foundation date of Tan'gun Chosŏn, 2333 BCE, generously rounded up. In the 13th century accounts, the date of Tan'gun Chosŏn was matched to the reign of mythical Chinese emperor Yao, whose own dates had only been fixed in China during the 3rd century CE. In Korea the Tan'gun Chosŏn date was calibrated by scholars during the 17th century as the 25th reign year of Yao. 20th century revisionist historians thus sought to detach Tan'gun from China and push the date earlier, initially by newly historicizing a pre-Tan'gun period corresponding to the time between Hwan'ung's descension to Korea and the establishment of Chosŏn by Tan'gun.

In official South Korean historiography today, Old Chosŏn is increasingly treated as a proper noun, romanized into English as Gojoseon (Kojosŏn). The orthodox foundation date of 2333 BCE is still regularly cited, such as to result in a single polity name Gojoseon with conventional, though not unchallengeable, dating of 2333–108 BCE. The Tangi calendar similarly counts from 2333 BCE. However, under the influence of 20th century revisionism, the designation of Old Chosŏn becomes still more ambiguous, because not only do these schemes diminish Kija, they further assert that the territory usurped by Wi Man—that would constitute Wiman Chosŏn—occupied only the western frontier region of Chosŏn proper, and that the subsequent 108 BCE Han campaign similarly reached no further. According to this interpretation, the Chinese sources attesting Chosŏn and the commanderies refer only to this western frontier zone; Old Chosŏn proper—ruled by *Tan'gun* lords—continued to exist across geographical Manchuria and the Korean peninsula until, due only to internal conflicts, it eventually evolved into the constituent historical Korean polities.¹⁸

In short, influential idioms of current day Korean pseudohistory that argue for a charter empire named Chosŏn, effectively combine the following elements. Firstly the notion of a historical polity named Chosŏn (as attested from *Shiji* onwards); secondly Dongyi conflationism that had originally been connected to the Kija legend but is now dissociated; thirdly the orthodox and still current notion of Tan'gun Chosŏn having been the first state of Korean history; and, finally, the usage of Old Chosŏn as a now ambiguous umbrella term encompassing both the mythical charter state of Tan'gun Chosŏn, and the historical Chosŏn polity attested

in Chinese sources and associated with the Yan expansion, Wi Man's usurpation and the Han conquest. This last factor in particular, both enabled the historicization of Tan'gun Chosŏn and encourages a forced association of archaeological cultures, with the ambiguously defined polity of "Old Chosŏn."

Delineating the Charter Territory: Culture-Historical Archaeology and the Imprint of Political Manchuria

Together with textual evidence, discussed below, pseudohistorians seek to delineate the borders of their ancient Chosŏn empire through the supposed distribution of a range of diagnostic archaeological cultures, including, polished stone implements, various earthenware types, dolmen megaliths, bronze daggers and fine-lined bronze mirrors.¹⁹ For each case, the argument is that their distribution matches Chosŏn territory stretching from the Korean peninsula to southeastern Inner Mongolia, that the physical culture is entirely distinct from non-Dongyi China, and that the culture is a product of indigenous innovation originating in the Liaoning region rather than from any outside influence. Emphasis is placed on dolmen for their monumentalism and megalithic qualities, and on bronze items both for their sophistication and as evidence of indigenous metallurgy. In addition to the questionable reliability of any such distribution maps produced for this predetermined purpose, the fundamental problem in such methodology is the underlying "culture-historical" premise that material cultures can be directly equated to ethnic or political boundaries. But this is rarely the case, for, just as in the 21st century case of smartphones and yoga studios, desire for prestige or practical items and ritual practices may all transcend ethnic or political identification.

Owing to the depth of written antiquity found in Chinese sources, it further reflects the tendency to match these same archaeological cultures to the polities and peoples attested in sources. This approach works as long as there are: reliable sources giving locations and dates, clearly defined archaeological sites (e.g. fortress or palace structures, or cemeteries), no immediate candidates for alternative identification, and ideally *in situ* epigraphic confirmation. This method proved successful for identifying Lelang commandery remains at Pyongyang (P'yŏngyang) and works for identifying the capital locations of the later Three Kingdoms, as the above conditions are fulfilled. However, in the case of Chosŏn, aside from flawed historical geography concerning the western frontier, there are no sources that describe the extent of Chosŏn's territory, and in particular none associating it with central or northern geographical Manchuria, so in reality

there is no culture-historical correlation to be made between the Chosŏn attested in historical sources and physical remains.

Nevertheless, empire advocates assert that Chosŏn's territory incorporated all of China's current Dongbei or northeastern provinces up to the Amur river or just beyond, as well as the Russian Primorsky Krai.²⁰ This claim to geographical Manchuria is based on two flawed strategies. The first derives from premising the early central Manchurian state of Puyŏ to have been subordinate to Chosŏn. This claim is first attested in *Chewang ungi*, which alongside *Samguk yusa*, saw Chosŏn being cast as Korea's sole charter state. Prior to this, Puyŏ had independently played a significant role, particularly in the foundation stories of Koguryŏ and Paekche and from which Chosŏn was entirely absent. Puyŏ was less important to Silla, but with Silla's post-conquest incorporation of Koguryŏ tradition, Puyŏ survived on the periphery of Korean historiographical memory, principally as the northern homeland of Koguryŏ's mythological founder, Chumong, a story which itself had been adapted from the Puyŏ foundation story of King Tongmyŏng, recorded in earlier Chinese sources, and whose homeland is north of Puyŏ.²¹ Today the link to Puyŏ is reinforced by later Korean claims to continental Koguryŏ and Parhae (698–926) territory, both of which maintained administrative districts named Puyŏ.²²

The second strategy used by pseudohistorians to claim continental Manchuria as Chosŏn territory is based on the circular premise that Chosŏn was the original charter state not only of Korea but of greater Manchuria. With no other historical polities or peoples regarded to have occupied Manchuria prior to Chosŏn, there is no reason for its territory not to have expanded to the eastern coast and indefinitely northwards. According to this model, there would also be no reason not to claim all subsequent Manchurian peoples as descendents of Chosŏn, and this would be supported both by Dongyi classification and the broader Altaic hypothesis. However, while empire advocates typically incorporate early Dongyi peoples as attested in *Sanguozhi*, including those such as the Yilou treated as ancestral to later Manchurian peoples, advocates are often cautious in extending direct claim to medieval or early modern non-Chinese polities such as the Khitan or Mongols, and particularly the Jurchen-Manchu—presumably because these peoples and their associated conquest states were clearly subsumed into modern China and thus, in social Darwinist terms, were historical failures. Nevertheless, the northern border most often delineated by empire advocates, the Amur river, clearly corresponds to the Manchu Qing border with Russia. This implies a claim to the Manchu's core territory and by extension, that of contemporary mainland China, thus reflecting modern geopolitical concerns over assertions of Korean fraternity with the moribund Tungus peoples of Manchuria, to say nothing of

the speakers of Paleo-Siberian languages. Maps of the Old Chosŏn empire also resemble the shape of Japan's continental acquisitions during the first half of the 20th century, in particular reflecting the well-known ManSen (滿鮮 Manchuria-Korea) paradigm.²³ In both cases—Japanese Manchukuo (1932–1945) and Korean pseudohistory—the maps further reflect the formative influence of Qing territorial tradition and Qing period sources commandeered for the purpose.

Flawed Evidentialism: Historical Geography of Ancient Chosŏn and the Chinese Commanderies

As seen above, the broader delineation of an expansive territory is ostensibly based on projections of archaeology and subordination of early attested states to Old Chosŏn. However, concerning Chosŏn's western border, pseudohistorians go beyond these techniques, and claim to have more solid textual arguments principally derived from Chinese histories themselves. In contrast to the northern or eastern frontier delineations that encounter few competing claims, the western frontier of Chosŏn, both imagined and historical, bordered with polities well attested both in Chinese sources and through archaeology. West is also the direction from which perceived incursions of Chosŏn's territory came, including the ahistorical Kija polity, and historically the Yan expansion, Wi Man usurpation and the Chinese Han conquest. The position of the western frontier is consequently of utmost concern and there is a significant body of historical geography texts with which to work.

Professional consensus historical geography for early Korea is based on information learnable from the earliest contemporary sources. *Shiji* and *Hanshu* were compiled contemporary to the historical existence of Lelang and Xuantu, while *Sanguozhi* and *Hou Hanshu* were contemporary also to Lelang's southwestern partition of Daifang (c.200–314). The positions of Xuantu, Lelang and Daifang are broadly fixed by two schemes of interlocking data. The first is knowledge that the post 108 BCE conquest commanderies were established east of the administrative commanderies that had already been established by Warring States era Yan. Yan was centered at modern Beijing and the easternmost of its five conquest commanderies was named Liaodong (literally “Liao east”) broadly corresponding to modern central and eastern Liaoning province. Revisionist historians assert the new conquest commanderies of Han to have been in western Liaoning, but this is impossible owing to the attestation of Yan commanderies in the same place and an increasingly dense historical geography towards Central Plain China.

The second scheme is based on information from the *Sanguozhi* and *Hou Hanshu* Dongyi treatises that locate Xuantu, Lelang and Daifang in relation to indigenous polities and peoples of southern Manchuria, the Korean peninsula

and Japan, all circa the mid-3rd century CE. Although the commanderies historically came to an end, these early indigenous polities continued to exist *in situ* and evolved into early medieval states of the Three Kingdoms period and beyond. Their locations are fully attested to in sources and confirmed through archaeology and epigraphy. The latter period of the commanderies and their relative positions further correlates to references in *Samguk sagi*. Based on this information, Lelang can be placed centered at modern Pyongyang with Daifang to its southwest. The Pyongyang location of Lelang is further supported by pre 20th century tradition, and has been confirmed through modern archaeology, both during the Japanese colonial era and through published results of North Korean excavations.²⁴

The preceding state of Chosŏn is more enigmatic. There are no contemporary sources or epigraphy reliably attesting Chosŏn during its existence. Its location is therefore derived from two logical premises: 1) Chosŏn's territory was east of former Yan territory, i.e. east of Liaodong, and 2) Chosŏn's core was replaced by the principal commandery of Lelang, the capital prefecture of which, we learn from *Hanshu*, was named Chaoxian (K. Chosŏn). This second premise would locate the final—and only attested—Chosŏn capital of Wanghŏm (王險) at Pyongyang.

In their utilization of historical geography, pseudohistorians commit two principal fallacies: 1) working from predetermined negationist goals of locating Chinese incursions outside of the Korean peninsula, and 2) uncritically privileging later or less reliable sources over the earlier sources mentioned above.

Since its inception, the primary goal of revisionist historical geography has been to locate the Chinese commanderies of Xuantu, Lelang, and Daifang outside of southern Manchuria and the Korean peninsula broadly to the region of modern western Liaoning and eastern Hebei provinces. This repositioning most immediately serves the purpose of decontaminating early Manchuria and Korea proper of the modern colonial implications of four centuries of commandery rule (108 BCE–c.313 CE). As the commanderies are understood to have replaced Wiman Chosŏn, and Wi Man to have usurped Kija Chosŏn, it further serves to *provincialize* not only the commanderies, but the totality of preceding foreign interregna, while enabling claims that prior to these intrusions, Old Chosŏn's charter territory must have extended even further westwards, up to or even beyond, modern Beijing (Yan's historical capital).

On a concrete level, the textual arguments utilized by pseudohistorians focus on five core topics: 1) identification of the P'ae river, attested as having formed the final border between Chosŏn and Han dynasty China during the 2nd century BCE, 2) the location of Wanghŏm, Chosŏn's final and only attested capital, and potentially the commanderies that replaced it, 3) identification of the Liao river as used to demarcate the regions of Liaodong ("Liao east") and Liaoxi (literally

“Liao west”), 4) the eastern terminus of the Yan and Qin “long wall” fortifications, recorded as having been in Liaodong, and 5) the existence at Pyongyang of an indigenous state of Nangnang (Ch. Lelang) in place of the Chinese Lelang commandery, the latter supposedly being named after its original, failed campaign objective. The question of the locations of the commanderies—of principal revisionist concern Lelang and Daifang—are interwoven within all five topics, but particularly the second concerning the preceding Chosŏn capital.

All of these problematized topics notably pertain to the historically attested periods of Warring States (pre-Wiman) Chosŏn, and Wiman Chosŏn; even the case of a Nangnang polity is argued as having existed during the equivalent historical period of Lelang commandery rule. To this extent, revisionist evidentialism is reliant on source arguments. Aside from Nangnang, these topics are first attested in the sources mentioned above, *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, *Sanguozhi* and *Hou Hanshu*. However, as seen in Table 1, pseudohistorians’ revisionist arguments principally rely on historical geography sourced from texts postdating the historical existence of the commanderies, hereafter, in reference to the orthodox date for the end of the Lelang commandery labelled as “post 313 sources.”

Although utilizing later sources is not in itself a fallacy, pseudohistorians privilege convenient entries from these sources, which, on the surface, appear to locate the entities in question in the region of western Liaoning or eastern Hebei, thus supporting their predetermined goal of provincialization. In so doing, they adapt “the story” from the earlier sources and fit it to the post-313 historical geography while wilfully ignoring the logical geography of the earlier sources. They adopt this methodology because the information concerning the entities

Table 1 Problematic topics of historical geography.

Problematized topic	First relevant attestation	Sources relied on for revisionist arguments
1) P’ae river	<i>Shiji</i> (87 BCE)	<i>Shuijing</i> (Han dynasty or later) <i>Liaoshi</i> (1344) <i>Shengjing tongzhi</i> (1684)
2) Wanghŏm and the commanderies	<i>Shiji</i> (87 BCE)	<i>Shiji jijie</i> (c.425 annotations to <i>Shiji</i>) <i>Weishu</i> (c.554) <i>Jinshu</i> (c.646) <i>Liaoshi</i> (1344)
3) Liao river or Liaodong	<i>Shiji</i> (87 BCE)	None
4) Eastern terminus of Yan and Qin walls	<i>Shiji</i> (87 BCE)	<i>Shiji suoyin</i> (8th century, annotations to <i>Shiji</i>) <i>Tongdian</i> (801)
5) Nangnang state	N/A	<i>Samguk sagi</i> (1145) <i>Samguk yusa</i> (c.1283)

in question given in pre and post-313 sources does not agree. The critical fallacy they commit is in failing to understand or take into account the processes by which the post-313 references that appear to support their vision came to be. Before addressing these processes, we should first have a taste of this seeming evidentialism as pertaining to the first two problematized topics.

Problem 1: The P'ae River

The Chosŏn treatise of *Shiji* (87 BCE) states the P'ae to have marked the border between Han China and Chosŏn; in this context it attests the P'ae being crossed both by usurper (Wi) Man c.195 BCE, then in 109 BCE by an envoy of Han China and subsequently by the invading Han army. Traditionally this P'ae, mentioned in *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, was identified as the current day Yalu river. Opinion among scholars today is divided between it having been the Yalu or the Ch'ŏngch'ŏn'gang rivers. By contrast, pseudohistorians argue the P'ae river demarcating Chosŏn's western border to have been the Yuni (淤泥河, or "silted-muddy") river located in western Liaoning province.

Revisionist textual evidence 1:

Liaoshi (遼史 1344) identifies the P'ae river as the Ni (泥河) or Xuyuanluo (蕲芋濼); the *Shengjing tongzhi* (盛京通志 1684) clarifies this as the present Yuni river (淤泥河) located 65 *li* southwest of Haicheng (海城).²⁵

Ignored in this argument is that other passages of *Shengjing tongzhi* distinguishes between the P'ae identified in *Liaoshi*, and another, which it locates in contemporary Chosŏn; *Shengjin tongzhi* associates only this latter with Lelang.²⁶ Further ignored is the geography in question; the Yuni river identified by *Shengjing tongzhi* still exists today, but is quite insubstantial and dwarfed by the Liao river that enters the sea twenty kilometres to its northwest. This Yuni river is thus unlikely to have constituted a strategic frontier. A fuller explanation for the *Liaoshi* identification is treated in the discussion below.

Revisionist textual evidence 2:

A *Shuijing* (水經) entry for the P'ae describes it originating in Loufang prefecture (鏤方縣) of Lelang and flowing southeastwards.²⁷ The P'ae, therefore, cannot have been the Yalu or Ch'ŏngch'ŏn'gang rivers because these both flow westwards.

Liaoshi, equates Loufang to Zimeng prefecture (紫蒙縣), which in turn, can be located through the *Xin Tangshu* (新唐書 1060) as being in Pingzhou (平州), corresponding to western Liaoning.²⁸

As utilized by pseudohistorians, the *Shuijing* entry for P'ae provides two separate arguments. The first concerns the direction of flow. Relying on this entry to revise historical geography is a strategy common to pseudoscience, in which one anomaly is emphasized over a majority of interlocking sources that otherwise agree. Both earlier orthodoxy beginning with *Shuijingzhu* (水經注)—the early 6th century source within which the original *Shuijing* text survives—and current day historians consider the description of a southeastward flow as irreconcilable with the *Shiji* account, and therefore either a scribal error, or simply a different river. The second argument again relies on *Liaoshi* geography.

Problem 2: The Location of Wanghŏm and the Commanderies

Pseudohistorians argue that Wanghŏm, as attested in *Shiji* as the capital of Wi Man's Chosŏn polity (traditional Wiman Chosŏn), was located not at Pyongyang but in "Liaodong," the latter a designation they further seek to problematize and relocate.

Revisionist textual evidence 3:

A *Jijie* (集解 c.425) annotation to the *Shiji* account of Chosŏn, attests a tradition of associating Xiandu county (險瀆縣) of Changli (昌黎) in Liaoxi (modern western Liaoning) with the original Chosŏn capital of Wanghŏm (王險, C. Wangxian); this is based on the shared *xian* 險 (dangerous, precipitous, sheer) character found in their names.²⁹

Pseudohistorians make much of this hypothesis but it is simply a trivial coincidence of a single character occurring in two unrelated toponyms. In representing non-Chinese words, certain characters were used for their phonetic value and therefore often occur in personal names and toponyms. This generates material for speculating on associative patterns and folk etymologies. It has also been argued, for example, that Wanghŏm could not have been at Pyongyang because it is not a "precipitous" (險) enough location.

In revisionist argumentation, the location of Wanghŏm becomes inseparable from the commanderies not only due to the presumption of it having been replaced by Lelang but due to the nature of the following post 313 attestations.

Revisionist textual evidence 4:

The geography treatise of *Weishu* (魏書, compiled c.554 covering the period 386–550) records a Chaoxian (K. Chosŏn) county belonging to Beiping commandery (北平郡), corresponding to the region of modern eastern Hebei.³⁰

Revisionist textual evidence 5:

The geography treatise of *Jinshu* (晉 compiled c.646 but covering the earlier period of 265–420) records five commanderies of the same Hebei region—now named Pingzhou 平州—as Liaodong (遼東), Changli (昌黎), Xuantu, Daifang and Lelang.³¹

Revisionist textual argument 6:

The geography treatise of *Liaoshi* describes Liaoyang-fu (遼陽府 modern Liaoyang) as having originally been the territory of Chosŏn and the location of the Four Han Commanderies.³²

Historical Processes Distorting Post 313 Historical Geography

Aside from the aberrant case of *Shuijing*, the revisionist arguments listed above all rely on post-313 sources. These sources attest distorted understanding of historical geography owing to intervening processes between the historical existence of the commanderies and the sources' respective periods of compilation. These processes pertain firstly to the historical fate of the commanderies, that following their historical existence ultimately saw all three reduced to namesake status in western Liaoning and eastern Hebei; and secondly to at least one, if not several, historical instances of peoples being relocated *en masse* from the northern Korean peninsula and eastern Manchuria, again to the region of western Liaoning, and whose original history and geography was partially merged with records of their new locations.

Concerning the fate of the three historical commanderies, Xuantu was initially established in the far northeast coast of the Korean peninsula but it was relocated westwards to the northwest of Koguryŏ c.82 BCE; from there it was forced to relocate westwards by an emergent Koguryŏ before being overthrown c.333.³³ Lelang, by contrast, remained centered at Pyongyang throughout its historical existence. As the Han dynasty weakened, Lelang came under the control of the Gongsun rulers (c.189–238) based at the Liaodong commandery, during which time Daifang was established. Lelang and Daifang continued to be controlled by Chinese dynasties or proxies, until their final overthrow and absorption by Koguryŏ and Paekche, c.313 and 314 respectively.

Only after this period do the names of all three former commanderies re-appear in historical geography treatises concerning western Liaoning and eastern Hebei. Again, this is first reflected in the *Weishu* geography treatise and more clearly in *Jinshu*. These new attestations may in part be a reflection of actual

refugee communities who relocated in the wake of the commanderies' collapse. The *Weishu* entry above pertaining to a Chaoxian county of Beiping commandery describes Chaoxian as having originally belonged to Lelang, that Lelang had been abolished and that the Chaoxian in question was re-established in Feiru (肥如) by Chaoxian people in 432. Feiru is attested in *Hanshu* as a subordinate county of Liaoxi commandery, modern eastern Hebei.³⁴ The *Jinshu* entry attesting all three commanderies meanwhile appears to be more of a self-conceited attempt to incorporate the lost possessions into the textual record.

The second phenomenon to distort historical geography was the mass relocation of Parhae people by the Khitan Liao following the Khitan overthrow of Parhae in 926. As a consequence the geography treatise of the *Liaoshi* has been shown to conflate historical information pertaining to original Parhae sites in central and southeastern Manchuria with that of the relocated settlements in Liaoning and further westwards.³⁵ Thus *Liaoshi* describes the region of Haizhou in Liaodong (modern Haicheng, Liaoning province) as Parhae's southern capital, which historically had been located in Hamgyōng province in the northeast of the Korean peninsula; this has led many scholars to wrongly assume that Parhae's southern capital was in Liaodong. The Hamgyōng region of northeastern Korea, meanwhile, had originally been the territory of Okchō and in *Liaoshi* this fact, too, is transplanted to the description of Haizhou, thus appearing to show an early Korean peninsular polity, Okchō, as if it had been located in Liaoning. Okchō in Hamgyōng, meanwhile, had also been the first historical location of the Xuantu commandery (c.107–75 BCE) and, although not explicitly included in the *Liaoshi* entry, we might further speculate that the Liaodong association of Xuantu, as first attested in *Jinshu*, may have reinforced the conflations caused by the relocated Parhae communities.

Liaoshi's mixing of information pertaining to relocated Parhae peoples also explains the P'ae identification with the Yuni river in Liaoning. The earlier *Xin Tangshu* Parhae treatise identifies a Ni river as demarcating Parhae's southern border with Silla; this Ni is also attested in *Samguk sagi* as Silla's northern frontier, and was thus clearly located on the Korean peninsula. The identification of the P'ae with the Liaoning Ni is likely another transposed tradition that already pertained with the Korean Ni. We can only speculate at how this peninsular Ni may have originally been associated with the P'ae but it is likely related to the fact that from the early medieval period the Taedong river of Pyongyang had similarly become identified in name as the P'ae.

Although the historical P'ae constituting Chosŏn's border would have been north of Pyongyang, between 108 BCE and Koguryō's 4th century expansion, there would have been several centuries before this river came under Koguryō's

territorial control and before Koguryō developed either the literacy or motivation to lay claim to Chosōn's heritage. The Taedong association may either have been a product of Koguryō's incorporation of Lelang, the relocation of Koguryō's capital to Pyongyang, or Silla's post 668 incorporation of conquered Koguryō territory and the need to account for, and in the process *peninsularize*, northern Koguryō territory which it failed to take. For Parhae, meanwhile, Pyongyang and the lower Taedong remained just to the south of its frontier with Silla, the P'ae hydronym may therefore have been re-associated by Parhae peoples with any of the tributaries or nearby rivers that came to form the frontier. In short, any of these reconfigurations may have provided motivation to seek legitimization through evoking the memory of Chosōn or Lelang resulting in new identifications of the P'ae, however, ultimately there is a historical disconnect to the river referred to as P'ae in *Shiji*.

The *Liaoshi* description of Liaoyang-fu (遼陽府 modern Liaoyang) having originally been the territory of Chosōn and the location of the Four Han Commanderies may similarly be explained as a product of the Lelang associations. It has further been argued that in the medieval period claims to the heritage of Kija Chosōn as a charter state for civilization east of the Central Plain, were maintained not only by Koryō, but by the Khitan Liao; in this case it would have been necessary for the Khitan to locate Chosōn within their core territory.³⁶ In the subsequent Mongol Yuan period there was also the phenomenon of a significant Koryō community residing in Shenyang with Koryō princes bestowed the title "Shenyang king"; we could speculate that they, too, may have been keen to maintain a tradition of Chosōn having been located in Liaodong, thus making them heirs to the eastern mandate.

The toponymic end result of these two main processes informing the distortions of post 313 sources appear to support Korean revisionist goals of locating Kija, Wiman and the commanderies to western Liaoning or beyond it is precisely because these sources provided inspiration to the first generation of 20th century revisionist scholars who established the empire scheme promoted by pseudo-historians today. Reliance on post 313 sources therefore constitutes circular argumentation.

Problem 3: Locating Liaodong and Liaoxi

Liaodong ("Liao east") and Liaoxi ("Liao west") were originally the two easternmost conquest commanderies of Yan but subsequently became broader geographical designations. Their respective meanings of east and west refer to the Liao river that runs through modern Liaoning province, though historically it was the Yiwulu

mountains (醫巫閭山) west of the Liao river that delineated the administrative border.³⁷ As discussed just above, toponymic traditions associated with Chosŏn and Lelang were transplanted to Liaodong subsequent to the historical existence of Lelang; revisionist historical geography relies on these Liaodong identifications, as well as those pertaining to eastern Hebei (Liaoxi). However, by arguing the Liao river, that gave its name to Liaodong and Liaoxi in early history, as having been a different river further west of the current day Liao river, pseudohistorians seek to shift the entire setting of Korea's early history even further westwards than the false arguments derived from post 313 sources already seem to enable.

Pseudohistorians therefore propose alternative rivers in eastern Hebei, most often the present day Luan (灤河), as having been an ancient Liao, the result being the region historically regarded as Liaoxi becomes "ancient Liaodong," while "ancient Liaoxi" is placed still further west in modern Hebei.³⁸ Such schemes rarely attempt to explain what should happen to the interlocking historical polities and districts located in Hebei and further west as this is immaterial to their Korea-centric predetermined goals. Pseudohistorians provide no textual argument to support alternative identifications of the Liao, but rather it is a circular premise feeding into the following argument pertaining to the Yan and Qin long walls.

Problem 4: The Yan and Qin Walls, and Jieshi Mountain

The *Shiji* records that in the process of Yan's c.280 BCE eastward expansion against Chosŏn, and establishment of its five conquest commanderies, Yan constructed a fortified long wall stretching eastwards and terminating in Liaodong. This fortification was inherited by the Qin which built further walls. Yan initially expanded to the Manpanhan (滿潘汗), presumed to be a river. Under Qin, the easternmost region was "emptied" as a buffer zone, and under Han some of this territory was relinquished with the border withdrawn to the P'ae. This means even pre-Han "Chinese" penetration of Chosŏn would have already extended beyond wherever the P'ae is located and involved the physical symbolism of the imposition of China's "long walls." To negate this historical scenario, pseudohistorians take the *Shiji* record and combine with their premise of an "ancient Liaodong" to argue that the eastern termini of the walls were both at modern Shanhaiguan, eastern Hebei, and were therefore the same location as the later Ming dynasty wall surviving today.

Revisionist textual evidence 7:

Shiji and *Sanguozhi* record the Yan and Qin walls as terminating in Liaodong.³⁹ Concerning the Qin wall, *Shiji suoyin*, citing *Taikang dilizhi* (太康地理志), includes the following additional information: the terminus was in a coastal region, and

was close to a mountain named Jieshi (碣石山 K. Kalsök-san), which located in Suicheng (遂城) county of Lelang.⁴⁰

The same *Shiji suoyin* entry (prior to quoting *Taikang dilizhi*), and *Tongdian* (通典 801) both identify this Jieshi mountain as a contemporary mountain located in Beiping commandery; this corresponds to the present day Jieshi mountain of Hebei.⁴¹

In this revisionist argument, Jieshi mountain can be seen to function as a lynchpin connecting the eastern termini of the walls together with Suicheng county of Lelang, so not only the walls, but a portion of Lelang commandery is further seen to be located in Hebei, on which the broader location of Lelang can be further premised. Here, however, information provided in the original *Taikang dilizhi*, which is extent only in citations, should be distinguished from the opinions of the later *Shiji suoyin* and *Tongdian* compilers. To the extent that the *Taikang dilizhi* may be taken as reliable, we learn only that there was a mountain called Jieshi (Kalsök-san) (“rocky”) in Suicheng county of Lelang. The equation of this oronym to the Jieshi mountain in Hebei, which maintains its name still today, is the reflection of the *Shiji suoyin* and *Tongdian* compilers’ contemporary 8th century knowledge, influenced by post 313 toponymy. In particular it should be recalled that it is under the *Weishu* Beiping commandery entry that the 432 establishment of a Chaoxian county is recorded, reminding us that Beiping was a region to which the Lelang communities relocated.

Problem 5: The Indigenous Nangnang State

In asserting Lelang and other commanderies to have been located outside of the peninsula, and Old Chosŏn initially centered in Manchuria, pseudohistorians must nevertheless account for a large number of references and archaeology associating Lelang with the region of modern Pyongyang. This they do by arguing that Lelang was named after its failed campaign objective, an indigenous Lelang state, which in Sino-Korean pronunciation becomes Nangnang. For this purpose they utilize references from Korean tradition.

Revisionist textual evidence 8:

The *Samguk sagi* Koguryŏ annals attest a Nangnang king, Ch’oe Ri (樂浪王崔理).⁴²

The *Samguk sagi* Silla annals and *Samguk yusa* refer to Nangnang as a ‘state’ (國).

Korean pseudohistorians argue that Korean sources are more reliable than Chinese. That attestation of an indigenous Nangnang polity is absent from all

Chinese histories and occurs only in Korean sources is thus explainable as the product of a Chinese historiographical conspiracy.

However, the Korean authored references to a Nangnang state and king support only a convenient *ad hoc* explanation of what was at Pyongyang in place of the Lelang commandery. Like many toponyms, the name of Lelang/Nangnang may indeed have been taken from an earlier indigenous polity that gave its name to the region, if unfortunately unattested; the references found in *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, are themselves better understood as the later product of an established, though already distant, memory of the historical Lelang commandery. Existing *in situ* for some four centuries, Lelang is recorded as having at times lapsed into periods of near autonomous rule, with its name consequently diffusing to usage in titles of local rulers across the peninsula. Thus rather than denying the historicity of the commandery, critical historians and archaeologists have rather focused on the processes of its localization, and even *indigenization*, circumstances that might be well analogized with the understanding of Romano-British identity during the same period.⁴³

From a Central Plain perspective, meanwhile, Lelang became more broadly synonymous with the peninsula. The *Xin Tangshu* (1060) Silla treatise, for example, records in 620 Silla king Chinp'yōng being enfeoffed by Tang emperor Gaozu as the “Lelang commandery king,” (樂浪郡王) while *Samguk sagi*, which consulted Tang histories, similarly records Silla kings being enfeoffed as “Lelang commandery duke” (樂浪郡公).⁴⁴ The specific *Samguk sagi* reference to Lelang/Nangnang king Ch'oe Ri, which is both at an unlikely date of 32 CE and folkloric in nature, will be of similar provenance.

Korean revisionist historiography has long asserted a dichotomy between the supposedly “Sinocentric” *Samguk sagi* that, in their view, omits treatment both of Tan'gun and continental territory, and the “more authentic” *Samguk yusa*. This dichotomy is well known to be exaggerated, and, when convenient to their arguments, present day empire advocates are increasingly willing to privilege *Samguk sagi* over the earlier Chinese sources on the grounds that the former was nevertheless Korean authored and therefore more reliable. This pertains in particular to the question of the historical Samhan and dating of the southern Three Kingdoms era polities that followed.

Contesting the Samhan Polities

The Samhan, or “Three Han,” polities of Mahan, Pyōnhan (Pyōnjin) and Chinhan, are first attested in the Dongyi treatises of *Sanguozhi* and *Hou Hanshu*. There they are described as occupying the southern third of the Korean peninsula, and

explicitly stated to be south of Lelang and Daifang commanderies. Pseudohistorians object to this identification, not only due to their broader rejection of the commanderies' northern peninsular location, but because the existence of the Samhan polities during the mid 3rd century CE negates the possibility of the southern Three Kingdoms era polities of Paekche, Kaya and Silla having been in existence any earlier than the late 3rd century. To counter this, pseudohistorians consequently argue the Samhan to have either been located across continental Manchuria as constituent domains of Old Chosŏn, or to have been lesser polities once more restricted to western Liaoning.

The evidence utilized for identifying the “continental Samhan” combines textual references from two separate misidentifications of the Samhan that arose long after their historical existence. One occurs in medieval Korean tradition wherein the Samhan polities were conflated with the subsequent Three Kingdoms era states of Koguryŏ, Paekche and Silla. From this scheme, Koguryŏ is treated as the southernmost of the continental Samhan.⁴⁵ The second derives from distorted toponymy arising once more in *Liaoshi*, and carried further into the Qing period sources *Shengjing tongzhi* (1684) and *Manzhou yuanliu kao* (1783 滿洲源流考). Within these sources, Chinhan, historically located in the southeast of the Korean peninsula, emerges with a continental association. Firstly, *Liaoshi* records a Samhan county (三韓縣) subordinate to Gao province (高州) located in the region of Liaoxi.⁴⁶ Here it is explicit in noting this county as having been established to resettle prisoners of war taken from Koryŏ during the Khitan invasions of the early 11th century; the usage of Samhan in this region is therefore of no earlier provenance and reflects contemporary association of Samhan to refer to Koryŏ. However, in the same *Liaoshi* entry, the Samhan polities of Chinhan, Pyŏnhan and Mahan are aberrantly listed as having corresponded to Puyŏ, Silla and Ko[gu]ryŏ respectively. Here Puyŏ is likely confused for Paekche, which itself had adopted the moniker of South Puyŏ, but the result is to associate Chinhan with the continental polity of Puyŏ. *Shengjing tongzhi* later describes Gaiping county (蓋平縣) in central Liaoning, as having originally been Chinhan.⁴⁷ *Manzhou yuanliu kao* then takes the historical fact of Silla having evolved from Chinhan—in the southeast of the Korean peninsula—and conflates it with the Gaiping identification. The result is that *Manzhou yuanliu kao* appears to locate, not only Chinhan, but even Silla in Gaiping.⁴⁸ Owing to their problematic nature, pseudohistorians rarely cite these references verbatim but they clearly inspired the early revisionist notion of “continental Samhan,” maintained by some empire idioms today.⁴⁹

To account for the peninsular Samhan references, such schemes originally premised a gradual migration remapping the “continental Samhan” to the peninsula.⁵⁰ In this case, the dating of the peninsular Samhan is projected back

to the c.1st century BCE in order to dovetail with the orthodox dates of the Three Kingdoms as attested in *Samguk sagi*, and *Samguk yusa*. In recent years, however, a more polemical line of interpretation has been introduced by Yi Tögil that entirely rejects the notion of peninsular Samhan, arguing this to be another colonial-era conspiracy promoted by the Japanese in order to shorten the supposed deep antiquity of the subsequent Three Kingdoms era polities.⁵¹ Here the colonial Japanese motivation is cast as having been to argue the Japanese state of Yamato as having emerged as a historical entity prior to the Korean Three Kingdoms, thus asserting Japanese civilizational pre-eminence and greater longevity. Yi's objection to the peninsular Samhan is that, as represented in the Dongyi treatise, and in contrast to the representation of the Three Kingdoms polities in *Samguk sagi*, they lack the qualities of consolidated states, including not least foundation dates, and records of consolidation and conquest. From a nationalist perspective it is also problematic that they are chiefly attested in Chinese sources. The Samhan are consequently another element to be diminished through provincialization in Liaoning.

These two interpretations of the Samhan—one treating them as a constituent part of Old Chosŏn, the other as an invented conspiracy—utilize the sources in two separate ways but share a commonality in rejecting the 3rd century date of the historical peninsular Samhan, as attested in *Sanguozhi*, in order to maintain the supposed historicity of the southern Three Kingdoms era polities, as found only in the later *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*. The critical weakness of these revisionist interpretations is that the southern Three Kingdoms era polities of Paekche, Kaya and Silla are not attested in any Chinese sources until the late 3rd century or after. Variants of their names are, however, present in *Sanguozhi* among the listed subpolities of the Three Han; there Paekche (伯濟國) is subordinate to Mahan, while Kuya (狗邪國) and Saro (斯盧國) are listed under Pyŏnjin (弁辰)—Saro being attested in *Beishi* (北史 650, covering 420–589) and *Samguk sagi* as the precursor to Silla.⁵²

Pseudohistorians assert the early records of the *Samguk sagi* (covering 1st century BCE to late 3rd century CE), to be authentic. But these records are demonstrably proven to consist of a combination of supernatural foundation stories, folklore, empty filler, and artificially stretched lifespans of listed rulers as well as duplication of later kings. The details that may be historical, including records of conflict between Mahan and Paekche, have clearly been pushed back in date from the late 3rd or early 4th century.⁵³ In asserting the historicity of these early records, promoters of the conspiracy polemic are paradoxically mirroring the colonial Japanese scholars whom they would criticize for promoting the historicity of early Japanese mythology. Although pseudohistorians have conflicting

emotions towards the *Samguk sagi*, they take the 1st century BCE foundation dates as a minimum indicator of antiquity; as long as the Samhan and commanderies are not located on the peninsula, then there is no obstruction to projecting the Three Kingdoms' origins significantly deeper.

Extending the Time Depth of Ancient Korea: Hongshan, Yemaek Migrations and Park

In the 21st century pseudohistorians across the interpretative spectrum consistently lay claim to the Neolithic archaeological culture of Hongshan (c.4500–3000 BCE) as the origin of Old Chosŏn. The distribution of associated Hongshan sites straddles southeastern Inner Mongolia and western Liaoning, and the Hongshan culture is best known for its zoomorphic carved jades, and a ritual enclosure site discovered in 1979 in Niuheliang (牛河梁), western Liaoning; replete with evidence of idol statuary; the site is evocatively referred to as the “Goddess Temple.”⁵⁴

Pseudo claims of Chosŏn directly evolving from Hongshan serve several purposes. Core among them is to project the time depth of Korean antiquity to the Neolithic, and to cast Korean ancestors as the progenitors of a pristine Northeast Asian civilization. In these schemes, Hongshan is typically juxtaposed to the Yellow River culture, which is taken to represent early non-Dongyi “China.” This simplistic binary itself represents a projection of the traditional Shang-Zhou opposition, wherein pseudohistorians claim Shang as having been ethnically Dongyi, and by extension subordinate to Old Chosŏn.⁵⁵ Thus, rather than claiming Hongshan as purely “Korean,” pseudohistorians cast it as the origin of broader “Dongyi civilization.” They proffer the material culture of Hongshan as physical evidence of a proto-civilization replete with a proto-religion. Chinese scholars have also made similar arguments of Hongshan having been an early northern Chinese civilization of the upper Liao river basin. However enigmatic and sophisticated as the carved jades may be, the material culture lacks most elements that might qualify it as a “civilization” in the sense desired by its promoters, including evidence of writing, urban settlement or metallurgy, that would place it on a par with Yellow River, Indus Valley, Mesopotamia or Egyptian civilizations.⁵⁶

The mechanics to link the Hongshan culture spatially and temporally with ancient Chosŏn—which pseudohistorians situate east of the Hongshan locus in central Manchuria—comprise adaptations of two migration hypotheses, Yemaek and Altaic. These in turn, are supported by several conflationary associations including both Dongyi conflationism and between mountain names.

Yemaek (滅貊) is an enigmatic label attested in *Shiji* in the form Yemaek Chosŏn (穢貉朝鮮). Whether this should be read as ‘Yemaek Chosŏn’ or ‘Yemaek and Chosŏn’ remains ambiguous. Yemaek is further segmentable: in the *Sanguozhi* Dongyi treatises, the Ye (滅) are associated both with Puyŏ and an “East Ye” (東滅), while the Maek (貊) are associated with early Koguryŏ. The East Ye refer to a people residing on the central east coast of the Korean peninsula. From the Tang period, and pertaining today, East Ye has been associated with Kangnŭng, while Maek has been associated with Ch’unch’ŏn, both regions found in the central Korean province of Kangwŏn. While the label Ye has only ever been associated with Puyŏ and the peninsula, Maek—or Chinese Mo—is earlier attested in *Shijing* referring to a people thought to be located in a region to the southwest of Beijing.⁵⁷ Many historians in East Asia have been of a habit of assuming that the appearance of the same characters must indicate the same people, which means, however far apart in time or space they are attested, a migration must have occurred.

The notion of a Yemaek migration, or convergence of Ye and Maek peoples, is further married to a current hypothesis pertaining to archaeological mapping of ancient Chosŏn through typologies of bronze daggers. The academic version of the hypothesis suggests that in its early stage Chosŏn was centered in the region of the Liaodong peninsula, identifiable by “Liaodong type” leaf-bladed (or “mandolin shaped”) bronze daggers, but, with the 280 BCE Yan expansion, Chosŏn relocated to the Taedong basin around Pyongyang where they innovated “slender bladed type” daggers, found across the Korean peninsula. In order to impart a sense of ethnic continuity between Liaodong and northern Korea, the peoples in this “movement” model of ancient Chosŏn are labelled as being “ethnically Yemaek.” Scholars also talk of an archaeological “Liao River culture,” principally represented by the leaf-bladed bronze daggers and traced to the Lower Xiajiadian culture (2nd millennium BCE). Pseudohistorians take issue with, in their opinion, the limited territorial extent and shallow time depth, restricted to the Bronze Age, but they nevertheless utilize the Liaodong point of origin and notion of a “Liao culture” as both a temporal and spatial bridge back to Hongshan.

A second migratory scheme underlying claims to Hongshan ultimately derives from the Ural-Altai language hypothesis. In this case, Hongshan is premised as a point of convergence and secondary expansion following supposed earlier migrations out of Central Asia, for which the Altai mountains are either evoked or substituted with the alternatively enigmatic Pamir or Tianshan ranges. This concern for mountains is itself informed by East Asian traditions of mountain reverence, which for Koreans has come to focus at the national level on Mount Paektu. That the largely incidental name of Hongshan for the archaeological culture in question contains ‘mountain’ is only too convenient for pseudohistorical

purposes; that *hong*, meaning “crimson/red,” can be associated with primal sun worship, all the better.

This last aspect enables the incorporation of Hongshan within already Koreanized schemes of cultural diffusion that since the early 20th century have been a staple of world pseudohistory. These schemes, derogatively referred to as ‘hyperdiffusionary,’ premise an original proto-civilization from which all monument building civilizations of the world emerged by means of an elite people traveling the globe with their pyramid building know-how and primal sun worshipping religio-philosophy. In Western schemes, the proto-civilization has typically been premised as ancient Egypt, Atlantis, or as being of extra-terrestrial origin. In Korean authored schemes, both secular and religious, the proto-civilization is variously identified as Hongshan, Central Asia (Altai), or in the current North Korean variant, Pyongyang. The common factor are mountains, which in the absence of pyramids or ziggurats, are argued to have served as natural sky or heaven worshipping altars.⁵⁸

South Korean pseudohistorians emphasize the civilizational import in the name of Hongshan through analogy to Mount Paektu, the sky worshipping qualities of which have been established through the hypothesis of an early sun worshipping culture termed “Purham” (不咸) or “Park.” *Palk* is both the easily recognizable stem in the Korean word for ‘bright’ (밝-), and has been proposed as cognate to *pul* (fire), which in turn is premised as the underlying etymology for Purham mountain, and equated to Mount Paektu. In short: *palk* (bright) = *pul* (fire) = Pur[ham] (Mount Paektu).⁵⁹

Purham is a historical oronym associated with the Sushen people, who in pre-Qin sources are originally attested as residing north of the Central Plain in northern China or southern Mongolia. In a process similar to Dongyi conflationism, the label of Sushen was reused to denote the ancestors of the Yilou people of far eastern Manchuria. Similar to the case of Maek—when addressed at all—the connection between the pre-Qin Sushen and later Yilou, is typically premised as a migration that disregards the extreme time and spatial differences.

The original Sushen, north of the Central Plain, are described in *Shanhaijing* as residing in the vicinity of a mountain named Purham.⁶⁰ The later Yilou historically resided to the north of Mount Paektu, and so, in borrowing the label of Sushen for Yilou ancestors, Mount Paektu became identified as Purham. The Sushen-Yilou conflation occurs in the earliest description of the Yilou, found in the *Sanguozhi* Dongyi treatise; Purham is first incorporated into the equivalent description of the *Jinshu* Dongyi treatise.⁶¹ As argued by Byington (2016), the Sushen-Yilou conflation appears to have been created because the ancient Sushen were held in high regard, and both Sushen and Yilou peoples were known to present arrows as tribute.⁶²

However, once this conflation of Purham/Sushen for Paektu/Yilou is understood as false, then unless a Koreanic language was being spoken in southern Mongolia, the *pul / park* pseudo etymology that would tie Mount Paektu—and by extension Korea—into light worshipping schemes, and crucially enables the connective association with Hongshan as another sun worshipping locus, also becomes dim.⁶³

Hwandan kogi (1979) and The Lost Civilization of Hwan'guk

Current day Korean pseudohistory writings are superficially classifiable between secular evidential works that principally focus on historical geography of Chosŏn, and schemes associated with the 20th century new religious movement of Taejonggyo (est. 1909). In reality, however, there is significant overlap, both in their shared early 20th century origins and parallel development, and because the current day authors of secular pseudohistory are often either sympathetic to, or have been active practitioners of Taejonggyo. Diagnostic elements of Taejonggyo infused schemes include incorporation of two invented pre-Chosŏn periods, Hwan'guk (桓國) and Paedal (倍達), and uncritical reliance on several works of apocryphal history, chief and most recent among them, *Hwandan kogi* (Old records of the Hwan and Tan polities, 1979).⁶⁴ These Taejonggyo schemes blend extreme historicization of the orthodox Hwan'ung-Tan'gun story together with the Ural-Altaic premise of a Central Asian ethnic homeland, simultaneously marrying the latter to the notion of a proto-civilization, in the mode of hyperdiffusion schemes.

In Taejonggyo influenced schemes, the Central Asian proto-civilization is named Hwan'guk, while the subsequent Paedal period is today equated with the Hongshan culture. The Paedal period is then followed by Chosŏn, the latter matching standard empire conceptualizations. This three part periodization is based on attempts to argue that the Chosŏn foundation myth, as first attested in *Samguk yusa* and *Chewang ungi*, encodes historical information about ancient Korea. The original myth begins with sky god Hwan'in allowing his divine son Hwan'ung to descend to T'aebaek mountain; Hwan'ung then couples with a bear-turned-woman, giving birth to Tan'gun who establishes the state of Chosŏn. As a religion, Taejonggyo is based on the worship of this Tan'gun trinity, however, its historiography remains broadly rationalist.⁶⁵ The Hwan'guk-Paedal-Chosŏn periodization was adopted into *Hwandan kogi*, which as a fake history, was authored in literary Chinese; today multiple annotated translations into Korean exist, and from the first translation made circa 1986, the often extensive annotations of these editions have further emphasized rational interpretations.⁶⁶ Thus, in broad outline: Hwan'in is interpreted, not as a sky god, but as the period of

the proto-civilization of Hwan'guk that maintained a sky worshipping religion; Hwan'ung's descent corresponds to the migration of an Altaic speaking sun worshipping clan from Central Asia (Hwan'guk) to Hongshan; the bear-turned-woman, is a matriarch of a local bear totem clan, and Tan'gun is a title adopted by rulers of the subsequent state of Chosŏn. The last two of these interpretative explanations are also common to mainstream Korean explanations.

The replacement of Hwan'guk for Hwan'in has come to be supported by a specific conspiracy theory that claims colonial era Japanese historian Imanishi Ryū (1875–1932) to have altered the second character *kuk* (國 “state/polity”) of Hwan'guk to read as *in* (因) on a copy of *Samguk yusa* previously belonging to famed historian An Chŏngbok (1712–1791). This alteration was supposedly used to further support for Japanese denial of Hwan'guk and their assertions that the Old Chosŏn foundation story was no older than its mid-Koryŏ period Buddhistic influences. This hypothesis problematically premises the original character to have been in its modern simplified form of *kuk* 国. However, the reality is that the logograph *in* 因 in question is written with a recognized variant consisting of 士 inside of 口.⁶⁷ The hypothesis is further undermined by the fact that the actual *kuk* (國) character occurs in the same passage and multiple times throughout *Samguk yusa*, and is clearly distinct from the variant *in* character. It also fails to account for copies of *Samguk yusa* and *Chewang ungi* remaining in Korea that also have Hwan'in and not Hwan'guk and could not all have been altered by Imanishi.

Hwandan kogi is separately notable for elaborating on assertions originating with Sin Ch'aeho that Old Chosŏn innovated its own phonetic script. Naming this script *karimt'o* (加臨土) and dating its creation to 2181 BCE, *Hwandan kogi* includes examples of thirty-eight letters which are clearly designed to resemble the modern vernacular Korean script, thus implying the Korean script we know as *han'gŭl* to be some three millennia older than the well attested fact of its mid-15th century CE invention.⁶⁸

Since 2012, the most visible edition of *Hwandan kogi* to be found in the early history sections of Korean bookstores is that translated by An Kyŏngjŏn, the second generation patriarch of the millenarian new religion of Chŭngsando. Chŭngsan type religions evolved during the 20th century in parallel to Taejonggyo and principally concern themselves with messiahs, cosmic cycles of time and an imminent new era. Established circa 1974 by An's father and based in Daejeon (Taejŏn), Chŭngsando further situates itself within local prophetic traditions associated with nearby Kyeryong mountain. An's *Hwandan kogi* remains strictly rationalist but he seeks to incorporate it into his father's millenarianism by arguing that *Hwandan kogi* encodes Koreans' ancient religio-philosophy, knowledge of which will enable practitioners to survive the coming apocalypse, with Korea and

Daejeon thereafter becoming the centre of a future global civilization, mirroring Hwan'guk of an earlier cosmic cycle.⁶⁹

Whether in his millenarianism or adoption of pseudohistory, An's work is notable for pairing Korean discourses with their Western analogues, for which purpose he cites both earlier and current day Western pseudoscience from Nostradamus, and the creator of the lost Pacific continent hypothesis of Mu, James Churchwood (1851–1936), to Colin Wilson's *From Atlantis to the Sphinx: Recovering the Lost Wisdom of the Ancient World* (1996), and prolific author of "lost civilizations" type pseudoarchaeology, Graham Hancock (b.1950). An asserts, for example, that Hwan'guk, which he characterizes as a "northern-father-sky" proto-civilization, had a corresponding "southern-mother-earth" civilization which was the lost Pacific continent of Mu, to which, he further claims, Atlantis was merely a secondary colony.⁷⁰ In this way, An frames Hwan'guk within the popular lost civilizations discourse that has evolved from pre-war Western hyperdiffusion hypotheses that already informed the *Park* scheme. Although aberrant to the typical chauvinism displayed in Korean pseudohistory pertaining to Chosŏn, An's embrace of Western pseudoscience nevertheless mirrors the earlier adoption of the Ural-Altai hypothesis, as well as the folkloristic strategies underpinning the rationalization of the Hwan'ung-Tan'gun account. It further constitutes an appeal to alternative academic authority.

Astronomical Affirmations

In asserting the authenticity of *Hwandan kogi*, An's introduction also invokes the scientific authority of Pak Ch'angbŏm, an astronomer who in the mid 1990s claimed to have verified the historicity of astronomical events recorded in both *Hwandan kogi* and, separately, the early records of the *Samguk sagi*.⁷¹ In the case of *Hwandan kogi*, Pak (1993) claimed to have achieved a positive correlation between a planetary parade described in *Hwandan kogi* as having occurred in 1733 BCE and an actual parade calculated to have occurred in 1734 BCE but, aside from the forged nature of *Hwandan kogi*, Pak's argument has been criticized for exaggerating both the degree of correlation as well as the rarity of the event.⁷²

Concerning *Samguk Sagi*, Pak (1994) claimed to have verified the historicity of solar eclipses recorded in entries dating between the 3rd and 7th century by correlating the specific dates to eclipses he calculates to have occurred across mainland China, from the Yangtze river to northern Manchuria. Combined with this geographical spread, he further takes the lack of correlation between eclipses recorded in the separate three annals of *Samguk sagi* to argue that the Koguryŏ, Paekche and Silla must each have had their own astronomical science. Rather than

seeing the calculated locations as evidence for the arbitrary nature of the entries and likely borrowing from Chinese sources, Pak allows for the implication that the Three Kingdoms could have possessed continental territories.⁷³ Pak's work continues to be cited as positive scientific support for authenticity of *Hwandan kogi* and the early *Samguk sagi* records.

The "Colonial View of History" Conspiracy Theory

In pseudoscience, conspiracy theories serve to explain why a given hypothesis is rejected by professional scientists and scholars. More often than not, pseudoscience advocates are non-professionals, a designation here including scholars trained in disciplines other than on which they publish. A notable phenomenon in Korea, for example, is the number of pseudohistorians who have majored in either economics or sociology.⁷⁴ Pseudoscientists can self-rationalize rejection and marginalization from the professional field through embracing their outsider identity. The more they are ignored or rebuffed, the more this identity is seemingly confirmed, together with the conviction that they have discovered a paradigm changing truth so uncomfortable to dogmatic scholars as to require continued suppression by the academy. This self-conceit is regularly evoked by advocates of "lost civilization" discourses such as Graham Hancock and Korean empire advocates.

In countries that have been subject to the trauma of modern colonization, meanwhile, the anti-establishment thrust can be closely tied to politically emotive postcolonial discourses. In the case of Korean pseudohistory, the preoccupation with early history and supposed lost continental territory is a direct product of popular ethno-nationalist historiography that was forged during and in response to Japanese colonization.⁷⁵ Current day pseudohistorians invariably cast themselves as inheritors of this tradition, and they consciously seek to associate their outsider identity with the hallowed status of colonial era independence activists who were suppressed and persecuted by the Japanese regime.⁷⁶ In turn, they mischaracterize the opinions of current day critical scholars—the academic establishment—as continuing Japanese colonial historiography for the reason that they locate the early "colonial" entity of Lelang at Pyongyang, and reject both the historicity of an ancient Korean empire and Taejonggyo periodization. This is the "colonial view of history" polemic and consists of three core arguments: the location of the commanderies, the foundation dates of the southern Three Kingdoms polities—both discussed above—and finally, the existence of the Mimana Nihonfu (任那日本府), understood as a Japanese administrative organ that supposedly governed peninsular territory south of the Lelang commandery as an imperial enclave of early Japan.

The term Mimana Nihonfu is attested in the Japanese history, *Nihon shoki* (720), and both its location and identity are equated with the Three Kingdoms era Kaya states of the Naktong river basin. Both *Nihon*—“Japan”—and the administrative unit of *fu*, are anachronistic terms for the period during which the Kaya states existed and the notion of an imperial Japanese enclave drawn from *Nihon shoki* is clearly a retrospective projection from the early 8th century. According to the “colonial view of history” polemic, any mention by critical historians of Mimana or usage of the *Nihon shoki* entries is tantamount to continuing colonial historiography. However, while Mimana Nihonfu may be an invention of the *Nihon shoki*, Mimana (K. Imna) is much earlier attested on the 414 Kwanggaet’o Stele inscription, in the compound form Imna Kara (任那加羅)—Kara being a variant form of Kaya. On the stele text, Imna Kara is associated with Wae (倭) people, an ethnonym for early Japanese, who were clearly active on the peninsula. Thus it is undeniable that there was an entity called Imna/Mimana associated with the Kaya states, and ethnic Wae people were historically present on the peninsula, and it is incumbent on professional scholars to examine these using all sources available. Although *Nihon shoki* was compiled at a later date and contains multiple problems of interpretation, it is still a key source significantly predating *Samguk sagi*. Indeed, professional South Korean scholars have worked to negate the colonial era interpretation of Mimana precisely through critical usage of the *Nihon shoki*, and either emphasize its connections to Paekche or its agency as a Kaya entity.⁷⁷

Unlike the circumstance of Lelang commandery, archaeologists have failed to uncover any evidence of a Japanese Mimana on the peninsula. Thus, while the first two complaints found in the “colonial historiography” polemic, concerning the commanderies and early Three Kingdoms, are a case of pseudohistorians arguing against better consensus-forming evidence, their accusation concerning the Mimana Nihonfu is a strawman because critical historians and archaeologists also reject its historicity. Of the three topics, however, Mimana is most immediately evocative of imperial Japan and therefore most efficacious in painting establishment scholars as “pro-Japanese traitors.”⁷⁸ It was thus both a serious accusation as well as indication of the continuing currency of the polemic, when in June 2017, Democrat Party assemblyman To Chonghwan stated, without citing evidence, that current domestic Korean research on Kaya is funded by Japan in order to maintain the Mimana Nihonfu interpretation.⁷⁹

Alongside Mimana, pseudohistorians seek to further defame professional domestic historians by tracing their academic lineages to Japanese scholars and premising such lineages as the supposed reason establishment scholars should remain “loyal” to Japan.⁸⁰ This, again, is to be contrasted with pseudohistorians’ own self-proclaimed independence activist lineages. However, the reality to this

latter claim, is that the intervening generation of pseudohistorians active during the Park Chung Hee (Pak Chōnghŭi) era whose activities laid the foundation for the current day phenomenon—including establishing the colonial historiography polemic, propagating Taejonggyo and forging *Hwandan kogi*—all had privileged careers in the Japanese empire, and if judged by the same standard that pseudohistorians use against the academic establishment, would certainly be labelled as having been “arch collaborators.”⁸¹

Making Korea Great Again?

While competing interpretations of Korea’s contemporary history transparently align with political affiliations, visions of ancient greatness appeal across the political divide. Indeed, during the height of the government authored textbook dispute supported by New Right historians who were principally concerned with revising the account of modern and contemporary history, the inclusion of aggrandizing ancient history was touted by then education minister, Hwang Uyō to rebut charges of the project being pro-Japanese and anti-patriotic.⁸²

In a 2013 Liberation Day address, then president Park Geun Hye stated, “According to the late Koryō scholar Yi Am, the nation is like the body to humans, history is like the soul.” President Moon Jae In’s historic September 2018 speech delivered in Pyongyang, meanwhile, included the line, “We have lived together for 5,000 years and lived divided for seventy.” In the contexts in which they were delivered both utterances are relatively innocuous, if appropriately nationalistic in tone. Park’s words, however, were lifted from *Hwandan kogi*, while Moon’s figure of 5,000 years is derived from the foundation date of Old Chosōn, premised on the assumed historicity of the Hwan’ung-Tan’gun myth.⁸³

With the change of administrations, the textbook project promoted by the New Right was cancelled, but in 2018 the flow of pseudohistory publications showed no sign of abating. In Korean language the fallacies and chauvinistic nature of Korean pseudohistory are being more systematically exposed in both the academic and public arena by scholars associated with the Young Historians, as well as writer and blogger, Yi Munyōng.⁸⁴ While alone they are unlikely to fully stem the tide, their cogent critiques are readily available for any Korean layperson willing to critically reconsider ideas that have long received official sanction and that remain closely entwined with both Koreas’ postcolonial national identities.

Rather than the religiosity of Hindu nationalism or such as is inculcated in South Korea by Chūngsando, perhaps the most tenacious force critical scholars of early Korea are competing against is the idea that history must serve the singular purpose of national revitalization and competition in the present. When

confronted with their own fallacies, the last line of defence resorted to by Korean pseudohistorians, and indeed, their starting premise, is that the notion of a grand ancient history is vital in countering Japan and China today. This is not to say that Korea's neighbours are historiographically innocent but Korean pseudohistorians would fight fire with fire; their disappointment with, and consequent targeting of, the Northeast Asia History Foundation was precisely because it supported methodologically sound research over promotion of an imaginary ancient empire.

The epidemic of Korean pseudohistory is certainly worthy of socio-political contextualization, and questions concerning its continuing appeal to the public, as well as, its close connections to political and new religious networks, should all be critically investigated; such endeavour may be illuminating of contemporary global post-truth discourses, as well as prescient in the context of evolving inter-Korean and East Asian political relations. However, any such research should not substitute the equally critical study of early northern East Asia which should proceed without obstruction from pseudohistory, and which has more to tell us about the actual development of human culture than we will learn from fantasies of ancient empire.

Notes

1. Transcripts of the hearings can be accessed in Korean from the National Assembly Minutes website, under a search for the committee “제19대국회 동북아역사왜곡대책특별위원회” likms.assembly.go.kr/record/. I would like to thank both the editors and anonymous reviewers for their sound suggestions on the drafts of this paper. Throughout this paper three words are used with particular meaning: “revisionist” refers to nationalist historiography authored during the colonial era; “historical” used as a qualifier refers to models of the past constituting professional consensus; “critical” is employed as an antonym to “pseudo.”
2. Examples of “history of history” treatment include Logie 2016 and Xu 2016.
3. A non-exhaustive sample of recent publications, as well as republications includes: Chisŭng 2018, Chŏn 2017, Hwang 2017, Im 2018, Kim, Yi, Hong & Hwang 2017, Mun Sŏngjae 2016, Pak Kyŏngsun 2018, Ri 2018[1963], Sin 2018, Son 2017, Yang 2018, Yi Ch'angu 2018 and Yun 2017[1986].
4. For discussion of the history dispute over Koguryŏ, see Byington 2005.
5. Ki 2017 (1): 32, Fritze 2009: 12–16.
6. Fagan 2006: 30–42.
7. Understanding of Indian pseudohistory is based on Witzel (2006). Postcolonial characteristics may similarly be found in Chinese historiography, but owing to Korea and China's interconnected histories it would be hard to say whether such characteristics were diagnostic parallels or regionally contingent.
8. Recent critical Korean literature on the Shandong Dongyi includes Kim Chŏng-yŏl 2018, and Tongbuga yŏksa chaedan 2018.
9. The compilation dates for the official Chinese histories and the periods they cover are according to Wilkinson 2013: 626 (Table 112). For systematic analysis and diachronic distinction in pre and post Qin usages of “Dongyi” see Pak Chaebok 2018: 50–63.

10. The idea of Old Chosŏn Dongyi being the originators of Chinese culture began with early revisionist Sin Ch'aeho, but today the assertion is usually found within works influenced by Taejonggyo. The greatest variable is whether to claim Chinese logographic script as also being a Dongyi Korean innovation, or whether to contrast it negatively with the supposed early invention of a proto-han'gŭl type script. The latter has been favored by Sin and adopted into *Hwandan kogi* (1979), while the former was later professed by An Hosang (1979: 225); for a recent articulation of the former see the 2018 Hangul Day article, "Chinese writing was the creation of our Dongyi people" 한자는 우리 민족 동이족이 창제했다 www.sisapress.com/journal/article/177924 (accessed 2018.10.10).
11. Ramstedt 1928.
12. For discussion of Amuric, see Janhunen 2016.
13. For a cogent discussion see Janhunen 1996: 237 and Vovin 2005.
14. Typological similarities between the Altaic *type* languages are further present in the Uralic languages; this resurrected Ural-Altaic paradigm is now termed as Transeurasian, though this term is also used by Robbeets with assumptions of genetic affiliation. For critiques of Robbeets' work, see Vovin 2009 and Georg 2013.
15. Kim and Sin may be understood as the founding architects of revisionist historiography; in particular Sin's works, including *Chosŏn sanggo munhwasa* (朝鮮上古文化史 estimated c.1914) and *Chosŏn sanggosa* (朝鮮上古史 c.1924), provide the blueprint for the "charter empire" conceptualization of Old Chosŏn. For modern non-critical editions, see Sin 2006 and 2007. Ch'oe, meanwhile introduced folkloristic interpretations of the Hwan'ung-Tan'gun account.
16. The most influential empire advocates, whose works are the main concern of this article are Yun Naehyŏn and Yi Tŏgil: see Yi & Kim 2006, and Yi 2009, 2014 and 2015, and Yun 2017, 2014 (1 and 2) and 2013. Yi has also republished Ri Chirin's *Kojosŏn yŏngu*, as Ri 2018. Representative examples of pan-Altaic interpretations include Kim Unhoe 2006 and 2012, and Yi Kihun 2015.
17. This model begins with Sin Ch'aeho; the most influential recent iteration has been the work of Yun Naehyŏn, e.g. Yun 2017[1986].
18. This interpretation began with Sin Ch'aeho and is maintain by all empire advocates today.
19. The first treatment of "Old Chosŏn archaeology" is Ri 1963: 316–342, 399–410. For context of this work and the unlikelihood of it having been solely of Ri's authorship, see Kang 2018. Yi's methodology has been adopted by Yun Naehyŏn and Yi Tŏgil.
20. Only pan-Altaicists asserting Old Chosŏn's reach to the America's will show any interest in northeastern Asia beyond the Amur but usually only in the form of arrows depicting routes of migration across the Bering Strait, an early example being Pak 1970: 10.
21. Byington 2016 (1): 181–186.
22. Byington 2016 (1): 336 and 347.
23. For example, Yun 2017: 107 and the fold out map included in Yi Tŏgil & Kim (2016). For discussion of ManSen, see Tanaka 1993: 247–253.
24. For Lelang archaeology, Jung 2013 and An Chŏngjun 2016.
25. *Liaoshi* 38: 456–457 (Geography 2, Dongjing dao): 溟水, 亦曰泥河, 又曰葍芋瀼, 水多葍芋之草. *Shengjing tongzhi* 25: 440: 淤泥河城北五十五里詳見海城縣 (Chinese Text Project).
26. *Shengjing tongzhi* 28: 353 (Old Ni): 古泥河... 明一統志從之又以朝鮮大通江為泃水考泥河在海城縣西南六十五里蓋平縣北五十里源出聖水山流至遼真山散漫為遼時之葍芋泊今為葍芋瀼水多葍芋之草與朝鮮境內之溟江不同. 100: 37 (Liaoyang commandery 遼陽郡): 遼志云本漢泃水縣高麗改為句麗縣渤海為常樂縣泃水在漢樂浪郡今朝鮮界內金德常樂乃渤海中京顯德府縣名皆不在此.
27. *Shuijing zhu* 14: 泃水出樂浪鏤方縣, 東南過臨瀛縣, 東入于海 (Chinese Text Project).
28. *Liaoshi* 38: 457 (Geography 2, Dongjing dao): 紫蒙縣. 本漢鏤方縣地 (本漢鏤方縣地 鏤方, 漢書地理志:後漢書郡國志均作鏤方, 屬樂浪郡.) *Xin Tangshu* 39: 1021 (Geography 3, Pingzhou

- Beiping jun): 平州北平郡... (永泰元年[765 CE]置。有溫溝·白望·西狹石·東狹石·綠疇·米磚·長楊·黃花·紫蒙·白狼·昌黎·遼西等十二戍)。
29. *Shiji* 朝鮮列傳第五十五 115: 2985 (Treatise 55, Chaoxian): 朝鮮王滿者, 故燕人也... 都王險 (集解 [Jijie] 徐廣曰 昌黎有險濱縣也)。
 30. *Weishu* 106上: 2497 (Geography 2, part 5): 北平郡(秦置) 領縣二... 朝鮮(二漢·晉屬樂浪, 後罷。延和元年[432 CE]徙 朝鮮民於肥如, 復置, 屬焉。) 昌新。
 31. *Jinshu* 14: 427 (Geography 上, Pinzhou): 平州... 魏置東夷校尉, 居襄平, 而分遼東·昌黎·玄菟·帶方·樂浪五郡為平州, 後還合為幽州。及文懿滅後, 有護東夷校尉, 居襄平。咸寧二年[276 CE]十月, 分昌黎·遼東·玄菟·帶方·樂浪等郡國五置平州。
 32. *Liaoshi* 38: 455 (Geography 2, Dongjingdao) 東京遼陽府, 本朝鮮之地... 武帝元封三年, 定朝鮮為真番·臨屯·樂浪·玄菟四郡。
 33. See Byington 2013: 320–332, and Byington 2016 (2): 31–70.
 34. *Hanshu* 28下: 1625 (Geography 8下, Liaoxi): 遼西郡, (秦置... 屬幽州)... 縣十四... 且慮, 海陽, 新安平, 柳城, 令支, 肥如, 賓從, 交黎, 陽樂, 狐蘇, 徒河, 文成, 臨渝。
 35. For a crucial discussion of conflations inherent in the *Liaoshi* geography, see Byington 2016 (1): 322–326.
 36. Wang 2015: 366n70 citing Jiang 2011.
 37. Byington 2016 (1): 52.
 38. Sin Ch'aeho suggested the Luan while Ri Chirin argued for Dalinghe (大凌河). Yun Naehyön and Yi Tögil both argue the Luan.
 39. *Shiji* 110: 2886 (Xiongnu treatise): 燕亦築長城, 自造陽至襄平。置上谷·漁陽·右北平·遼西·遼東郡以拒胡。 *Sanguozhi* 30: 850 (Dongyi treatise): 侯準既僭號稱王, 為燕亡人衛滿所攻奪 (魏略曰... 燕乃遣將秦開攻其西方, 取地二千餘里, 至滿番汗為界, 朝鮮遂弱。及秦并天下, 使蒙恬築長城, 到遼東)。For detailed parsing, see Byington 2016 (1): 41–45.
 40. *Shiji* 2: 52 (Xia basic annals): 夾右碣石, 入于海 (索隱 [Suoyin] 地理志云 碣石山在北平驪城縣西南。太康地理志云 樂浪遼城縣有碣石山, 長城所起)。
 41. *Tongdian* 186 (Frontier 2, Koguryō): 碣石山在漢樂浪郡遼成縣, 長城起於此山。今驗長城東截遼水而入高麗, 遺址猶存 (按尚書云:「夾右碣石入於河。」右碣石即河赴海處, 在今北平郡南二十餘里, 則高麗中為左碣石) (Chinese Text Project).
 42. *Samguk sagi* 14: 2 (Koguryō Annals, Taemusin 15/4): 王子好童遊於沃沮, 樂浪王崔理出行。 *Samguk sagi* 1: 1 (Silla Annals, Yuri 14): 十四年, 高句麗王無恤, 襲樂浪滅之。其國人五千里來投, 分居六部。 *Samguk yusa* 1: 1 (Wondrous records 1, Nangnang guk): 樂浪國。
 43. Oh 2013.
 44. *Xin Tangshu* 220: 6203 (Dongyi treatise, Silla): 武德... 後三年 [620], 拜柱國, 封樂浪郡王·新羅王。 *Samguk sagi* 4 (Silla Annals, Chinhung 26/2 [565]): 北齊武成皇帝詔, 以王為使持節·東夷校尉·樂浪郡公·新羅王; (Chinpyōng 16 [594]): 隋帝詔, 拜王為上開府·樂浪郡公·新羅王 (Chinpyōng 46/3 [624]): 唐高祖降使, 冊王為柱國·樂浪郡公·新羅王。 *Samguk sagi* 5: (Sōndōk 4 [635]): 唐遣使持節, 冊命王為柱國·樂浪郡公·新羅王, 以襲父封。 *Samguk sagi* 8: (Sōngdōk 12/10 [713]): 降詔書, 封王為驃騎將軍·特進·行左威衛大將軍·使持節·大都督·雞林州諸軍事·雞林州刺史·上柱國·樂浪郡公·新羅王。
 45. On the medieval Samhan—Three Kingdoms conflation, see Breuker 2010: 30.
 46. *Liaoshi* 39: 481 (Geography 3, Chungjing dao) 高州... 統縣一: 三韓縣。辰韓為扶餘, 弁韓為新羅, 馬韓為高麗。開泰中, 聖宗伐高麗, 俘三國之遺人置縣。戶五千。
 47. *Shengjing tongzhi* 6: 盛京 (箕子避地朝鮮 武王即其地封之 遂為朝鮮界) 蓋平縣, 周(屬朝鮮 本辰韓地), 開平縣: 漢 (屬扶餘國)。As cited in Bae 2014: 296n102. The association of Chinha may have been at least partly derived from an earlier tradition wherein Parhae termed itself Chin.
 48. *Manzhou yuanliu kao* 2 (Samhan): 方位準之蓋在今奉天東北吉林一帶壤接朝鮮與我國朝始基之地相。 *Manzhou yuanliu kao* 6 (Samhan subordinate polities 三韓屬國): 謹案三韓在夫餘挹婁二國之南, 所統凡七十八國, 合方四千里。馬韓在西, 辰韓在東, 弁韓在辰韓之南。馬韓北與樂浪接, 所轄則在今蓋平復州寧海。 *Manzhou yuanliu kao* 7 (Nine Silla provinces 新羅九州): 謹按新羅始附庸於百濟後兼加羅任那諸國與百濟為鄰考其疆土東南並有今朝鮮之慶尚江原二道西北直至今

吉林烏拉又西近開原鐵嶺... 渤海為契丹所侵於是新羅西與契丹以海州巖淵縣為界西北與契丹以鴨綠江東八里黃土嶺為界矣雞林州之名始於唐龍朔三年以其國為雞林州大都督府國王世襲都督之號以音譯及地理考之即今吉林。

49. An example citing *Manzhou yuanliu kao* is Yi 2009: 213–214.
50. This interpretation originates with Sin Ch'aeho.
51. Yi 2009: 171–219, Yi 2014: 327–337 and Yi 2015: 231–298.
52. *Sanguozhi* 30: 849 (Wuhuan Xianbei Dongyi treatise 30, Han): 馬韓在西... 有..伯濟國. 30: 852–853: 弁辰亦十二國... (853) 有.. 弁辰狗邪國... 斯盧國. For an English translation of the *Sanguozhi* Han accounts, see Byington 2009.
53. Best 2006: 8, 31 and 58, and McBride (forthcoming).
54. For an overview of Hongshan, Guo 1995; for recent critical discussion in Korean, Hong Ŭngyŏng 2018. For representative treatment of Hongshan in pseudohistory and new religion U Silha 2007, An 2012: 100–113, An 2014: 175–187, Chŏng Kŏnjae 2015, and Yi Ch'angu 2018.
55. The Shang-Dongyi equation was first hypothesized in works by Chinese scholars including Wang Guowei's (王國維 1877–1927) *Yin buci zhong suojian xiangong xian wang kao* (殷卜辭中所見先公先王考 1921) and Fu Shijian's (傅斯年 1896–1950) *Yixia dongxi shuo* (夏夷東西說 1933), however, with the excavation of further Shang oracle texts, the Shang capitals are now confidently associated with the Erligang and Anyang (Yinxu) sites of Henan, west of Shandong. K'ohen 2018: 152 and Yi Yup'yo 2018: 354, 364.
56. This is not to demean the communities that did construct the Hongshan sites and artefacts, and nor to say that the articles of civilization listed above should be the only scale by which to measure human civilization; both Hongshan and dolmen mortuary sites may be better situated in “alternative complexities” discourses, or compared with the megalithic sites of the British Isles such as Maeshowe (Orkney) or Stonehenge.
57. *Shijing* 3: 7 (Decade of Tang): 王錫韓侯·其追其貉. Byington 2016 (1): 32–34.
58. In the case of Pyongyang, the immediate mountain is Myohyang.
59. These hypotheses were first articulated by Sin Ch'aeho and Ch'oe Namsŏn. See Sin 2006: 89; on Ch'oe's “Way of Pârk” hypothesis, see Allen 1990 and Logie 2016: 290–297.
60. *Shanhajing* 10 (Northern wastes 大荒北經): 大荒之中, 有山名曰不咸. 有肅慎氏之國 (Chinese Text Project).
61. *Sanguozhi* 30: 848 (Wuhuan Xianbei Dongyi treatise 30, Yilou): 挹婁在夫餘東北千餘里... 古之肅慎氏之國也. *Jinshu* 97: 2534 (Treatise 67, Sushen) 肅慎氏一名挹婁, 在不咸山北.
62. Byington 2016 (1): 36n27.
63. In reality the word Purham is in fact derived from “Buddha” via Chinese, and therefore cannot be evidence for a pre Buddhist civilization (Juha Janhunen—personal communication).
64. Recent Taejonggyo type histories include Yi Kangsik 2014 and Chŏn 2017. It should also be noted that Yun Naehyŏn is a prominent Taejonggyo practitioner, as was An Hosang, on whose exegeses of “ancient Dongyi philosophy” Yun clearly draws. An 1964 and Yun 2014: 40–71.
65. Foundational works are Kim Kyohŏn 1904 & 1914.
66. Im 1986.
67. See blogpost by Yi Munyŏng “Is it Hwan'guk or Hwan'in?” 환국인가, 환인인가 orumi.egloos.com/7419509 (accessed 2018.10.10). The theory is also found in An 2012: 25 and An 2014: 119.
68. See Im 1986: 67 or An 2012: 222.
69. In addition to the annotations, An's scheme is laid out in a four chapter introduction, An 2012: 14–165. Therein Chapter 3 explicating Korea's ancient philosophy draws heavily from Taejonggyo, while Chapter 4 introduces the tenets of *kaebyŏk* (開闢) millenarianism.

- An's main books on *kaebyŏk* similarly incorporate multiple references to *Hwandan kogi*, see An 2014: 108.
70. An 2012: 144 and An 2014: 96.
 71. An 2012: 61, and Pak 1993 and Pak 1994 respectively.
 72. See Ki 2017 (2).
 73. On the ahistorical nature of the solar eclipses recorded in the Paekche annal, see Best 2006: 58–59. For a critique of Pak 1994, see Lee 2008.
 74. Prominent examples include Ch'oe Chaesŏk (sociology), Kim Unhoe (economics), U Silha (sociology) and Wontack Hong (economics). In this instance, Yun Naehyŏn and Yi Tŏgil are aberrant for having trained as historians.
 75. Schmid 2002: 171–198, 233–236 Xu 2016: 96–106.
 76. Chief among this pantheon are Kim Kyohŏn and Sin Ch'aeho.
 77. See Sin Kayŏng 2016.
 78. Yi 2014: 337 and Yi 2015: 270.
 79. *Han'gyore* 한겨레 2017.6.6. “[Exclusive] To Chonghwan responds to criticism of [his] view of history “I’ll fight when I have to” “[단독] 도종환, ‘역사관 비판’ 반박 “싸울 땐 싸우겠다” www.hani.co.kr/arti/culture/culture_general/797721.html (accessed 2018.10.10).
 80. Yi 2009: 50 *passim*, 2014: 195, 232, 360 *passim*.
 81. Prominent examples among this generation include: Ch'oe Tong (1896–1973), a medical doctor and colonial era Catholic leader; An Hosang (1902–1999), a self-proclaimed Hitler admirer and former professor of Keijō Imperial University; Mun Chŏngch'ang, who worked in the colonial administration; and Pak Ch'ang-am, a former Kwantung Army officer who adopted the pen name Manju (“Manchuria”). Their representative pseudohistorical works include Ch'oe 1966, An 1964 & 1979, and Mun 1969 & 1979; Pak was editor of *Chayu* (“Freedom/Liberty” est. 1968), the journal through which pseudohistorians published.
 82. See “President Park’s *Hwandan kogi* quotation, the reason for touching on early history” 환단고기 인용했던 박 대통령, 고대사 건드리는 이유는 <http://m.mediatoday.co.kr/?mod=news&act=articleView&idxno=125897#Redyho> (accessed 2018.10.10).
 83. Park’s words are a translation of “國猶形 史猶魂 形可失魂而保乎” found in the preface to the “Tan’gun segi” section of *Hwandan kogi*, the compilation of which is attributed to Yi Am (李翬 1297–1364), see An 2012: 204. Although Yi Am is a historical personage, the line itself is believed to be a paraphrase from Pak Ŭnsik’s *Hanguk t’ongsa* (韓國痛史 1915). See Yi Munyŏng “The presidents *Hwandan kogi* quotation” 대통령의 환단고기 인용 <http://orumi.egloos.com/4823408> (accessed 2018.10.10).
 84. See Chŏlmŭn yŏksa hakcha moim 2017 and 2018, and Yi Munyŏng’s blog *Chorokpul ũi chaphak tasik* 초록불의 잡학다식 orumi.egloos.com.

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