# The Yemaek Tungus of Central Manchuria and Korean Peninsula:

# Interactions between the Xianbei and the Yemaek Tungus[[1]](#footnote-1)

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1. Neolithic Period Followed by Bronze Age in Korea Proper

**rice cultivation in the korean peninsula**

According to Nelson (1993: 162-3), the *Mu-mun* pottery sites in the Korean Peninsula “contain semi-lunar reaping knives, making it not unreasonable to believe they represent the beginning of rice cultivation in Korea.” The carbonized rice discovered in the Korean Peninsula indeed dates from 2400-2100 BCE (ibid). 1 Perhaps a group of ancient southern Chinese who were cultivating rice crossed the Yellow Sea at the end of the Neolithic period and found a similar ecological niche in the southern peninsula.2

**Blade of bronze dagger cast separately from hilt**

We find some hint of bronze in the Neolithic Hongshan culture (c.5000-3000 BCE). The Lower Xiajiadian culture (c.2200-1600 BCE) produced small bronze objects such as rings, knives, and handles. Most archeologists, however, believe that the full-fledged Bronze Age in Manchuria began with the Upper Xiajiadian culture (c.1200-600 BCE). Until c.1300 BCE, the hilt and the blade of bronze daggers in the Liaoxi and Liaodong regions were not separately cast.3 The Upper Xiajiadian culture, however, possessed broad-bladed bronze daggers (琵琶形銅劍) which, unlike the Han Chinese daggers, had their blade cast separately from their hilt. Since the blade of broad-bladed daggers in Korea proper was also cast separately from the hilt, the origin of the broad-bladed daggers that are found in Korea proper is often traced to the Upper Xiajiadian culture.4 Choi (2006: 27, 59-63), however, contends that the Bronze Age in the Korean Peninsula, represented by the broad-bladed bronze daggers, coarse-lined bronze mirrors, bronze arrowheads, crescent-shaped stone knives, disc-shaped stone axes, and plain *Mu-mun* pottery had commenced sometime between 2000-1500 BCE.

After showing various transitional shapes (變形銅劍), the broad-bladed bronze dagger was eventually transformed into the narrow-bladed slender dagger (細形銅劍 with its blade still cast separately from its hilt) by the Early Iron Age (400-0 BCE) in the Korean Peninsula.5 Coarse-lined bronze mirrors (多鈕粗文鏡) became fine-lined bronze mirrors (多鈕細文鏡), and the plain *Mu-mun* pottery that had been fired at 500-700º C became the plain burnished pottery fired at 700-850º C.Bronze daggers in a transitional shape are found in abundance in the Liaodong area, whereas the narrow-bladed daggers are found in abundance below the Cheong-cheon River. In the Korean Peninsula, the burial remains from the Early Iron Age retained the narrow-bladed bronze dagger and the fine-lined bronze mirror.6

**The highest density of dolmen in yemaek community**

In Asia, dolmen is found from southern India, Indo-China, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Taiwan to Kyūshū, but the highest density on earth (exceeding 100,000 units) is found in Korea proper. The word dolmen is Celtic in origin, from *tol* (table) and *men* (stone). The southern tradition of dolmen burials appeared later than the northern tradition of stone-cists burials. According to Nelson (1993: 159, 163), the staggering number of dolmen found in Korea proper suggests their indigenous origin as well as the possibility that the Yemaek ruling elites marked “their territory by means of their burial places, as occurred in the British Isles.” The Stonehenge in England was erected during this same period, the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze, c.1800-1400 BCE. Dolmens are numerous in Liaodong, especially in the Liaodong Peninsula, and known as far north as Jilin province, but are considerably denser in the Korean Peninsula than in the Manchurian plain.

Dolmens in Korea proper are believed to have been built during 2000-400 BCE. The so-called northern-type dolmen has huge slabs and capstones (weighing up to 300 tons), forming a cist-like chamber above ground. The so-called southern-type dolmen (including the capstone type without supporting stones) has a large capstone resting on several smaller stones at ground level with the burial in a (slab-built) stone cist or jar coffin in the ground underneath. Many scholars believe that the latter had evolved from the former, but quite a few scholars believe that the former had evolved from the latter. Broad-or-narrow-bladed bronze daggers and plain *Mu-mun* potteries appear in the Bronze Age dolmen burials, whereas stone daggers (together with other stone artifacts) and comb-patterned *Chul-mun* potteries appear in the Neolithic dolmen burials.7 Necklaces of tubular beads as well as comma-shaped beads (*gok-ok*) appear in dolmen burials that connect the Korean Peninsula, Japanese Islands, and Manchuria with the northern edge of Mongolia and Transbaikalia.8 According to Barnes (1993: 166), the dolmen sites never yield iron, and hence dolmen-building is thought to have been discontinued by 300 BCE at the latest.

According to Nelson (1995: 16), dolmens in the central Manchurian plain and the Liaodong Peninsula reveal “close connections with those in the Korean Peninsula in content as well as construction.”9 Similarities between the Manchurian basin and the Korean Peninsula, observed in the Neolithic sites in the form of comb-patterned *Chul-mun* pottery, continued in the Bronze Age sites in the form of plain *Mu-mun* pottery, broad-bladed bronze daggers, coarse-lined bronze mirrors, and dolmens. Dolmen, the status symbol of ruling elites, characterizes the Yemaek culture of central Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula. It differentiates the culture of Korea proper from the Donghu-Xianbei culture of the western Manchurian steppe or the Mohe-Nüzhen culture of the eastern Manchurian forest. 10

2. Ancient Yan and Chosun

**shaogong’s yan and jizi’s chosun in the *shiji***

Chosun appears in the records of the ruler of Qi (685-643 BCE) in the *Guanzi*, compiled during the Warring States period. Yemaek Chosun, together with Yemaek Puyeo, appears in the *Shiji* records on Yan. The *History of Later Han* records that the areas of Ye, Ok-jeo, and Koguryeo originally belonged to the territory of Chosun.11

According to the *Shiji*, King Wu (r.1049/45-1043 BCE) of Western Zhou (1046-771 BCE) conquered Shang (1600-1046 BCE) in 1045 BCE, and commanded his half-brother, the Duke of Shao, to release Jizi (Ki-ja) from the imprisonment imposed on him by the last king of Shang (who was a relative of Jizi). The *Shiji* then created the legend that King Wu enfeoffed Shaogong as the ruler of Northern Yan, and also enfeoffed Jizi as the ruler of Chosun, an eastern neighbor of Yan. With a few strokes, Sima Qian (c.145-86 BCE) installed two legendary Han Chinese royal scions as founders of the states located in the traditional domain of both Donghu and Dongyi.12 The first half of the Shaogong’s Northern Yan (c.1045-222 BCE) and Jizi’s Chosun (c.1045-108 BCE) were all contemporaneous with the Bronze Age Upper Xiajiadian period (c.1200-600 BCE).

King Wu enfeoffed Shaogong as the ruler of “Northern Yan.” He was presumably given the responsibility for the area around modern Beijing (old Jicheng 薊城) that controlled the entrance to China’s Central Plain. The *Shiji* notes that there must have been a “Southern Yan” that did not belong to the territory enfeoffed to Shaogong. The Duke of Shao, however, seems to have remained in the Zhou capital, and there is no evidence that he had ever resided at his new fief of “Northern” Yan.

The *Shiji* records the enfeoffment of Shaogong in 1045 BCE, and then the narrative skips to the rule of ninth-generation descendant (惠候 c.865-827 BCE), where the narrative picks up again. The *Shiji* then records that the Rong tribes attacked Yan, but Huan Gong of Qi sent troops in 664 BCE and saved the Yan. The *Shiji* also records that Zhao attacked Yan in 378 BCE. The *Zizhi Tongjian* records an attack on the Yan by Qi in 332 BCE. No meaningful record of (Northern) Yan, however, appears in chronicles until after the 330s BCE. According to Sima Qian, the Shaogong’s Northern Yan, “pressed by barbarians from outside and pushed by Qi and Jin from inside,” remained “the smallest and the weakest” among the Zhou feudal states, and yet managed to survive more than 800 years, despite several crises that threatened to destroy it (幾滅者數矣), and this remarkable fact should be attributed to the virtues of Shaogong.

**dating the construction of the Yan long wall**

It was in the final few years of the King Zhao’s reign (r.312-279 BCE) that Yan had allegedly burst out of its small confined area around Beijing, and achieved the greatest territorial expansion (led by one heroic general Qin Kai) toward the Northeast, the traditional domain of the Donghu and Dongyi.13

According to the *Wei Lüe*, when the Zhou became weak, the ruler of the Yan assumed the title of king in 323 BCE; then the “Lord of Chosun, the forty generations descendant of Jizi” also declared himself king; and these two states came to the brink of fighting each other. The armed conflicts between Chosun and Yan finally occurred---most likely sometime after the Yan victory over Qi in 284 BCE. According to the *Wei Lüe*, the Yan dispatched a general named Qin Kai to invade the western region of Chosun, (燕乃遣將秦開攻其西方) and acquired land of two thousand *li*. The *Wei Lüe* does not mention the construction of the Yan Long Wall.14

According to the *Account of the Xiongnu* in the *Shiji*, it was during the reign of King Zhao of Qin (306-251 BCE) that the Qin built a Long Wall as a defense against the Hu. It was also the same time period that King Wuling of Zhao (r.325-299 BCE) built a Long Wall and changed the customs of his people, ordering them in 307 BCE to adopt the Hu dress and to practice riding and shooting. According to the *Zizhi Tongjian*, King Wuling stated, as of 307 BCE, that “in the north of our country, there exist the Yan and the Donghu.” According to the *Shiji*, “a little later (其後),” apparently sometime after 306 BCE, Qin Kai, who had earlier been taken hostage by the “Hu” and enjoyed their fullest confidence, appeared in the state of Yan. After returning to Yan, Qin Kai mounted a surprise attack on the “Donghu,” making the “Donghu” retreat about a thousand li. The *Shiji* then notes that the Yan constructed a “Long Wall” from Zhaoyang to “Xiangping” (noted, by Wei Zhao, to have been located at Liaodong in his time), and established Five Commanderies (Shanggu, Yuyang, Youbeiping, Liaoxi, and Liaodong) as a defense (not against the Donghu or Chosun but) against the “Hu.” 15 The *Shiji* does not clarify the implications of the term “Donghu” appearing twice between the term “Hu.”

Yan was roundly beaten by the Qi in 314 BCE and King Kuai (噲) was killed, but his son Zhao (昭王) was able to attract scholars, including the capable militarist Le Yi (樂毅) from Wei, and to reconstruct palaces in the very first year of his reign, 312 BCE. The Yan state became wealthy by 284 BCE, but King Zhao observed that his soldiers were indulging in pleasure-seeking, unmindful of combat duties. King Zhao thereby appointed Le Yi as the chief commanding general and ordered him to launch an attack on Qi in alliance with Zhao, Chu, Hann, and Wei. The allied forces defeated the Qi army in the west of Qi land. Le Yi led the Yan army to capture the capital, acquiring the treasures of Qi, and continued to stay in Qi for five more years until 279 BCE, subjugating the entire Qi land except for two cities.

According to the *Zizhi Tongjian*, the new King Zhao had asserted in 312 BCE: “Since Yan is small in territory and weak in strength, we cannot yet revenge the debacle (燕小力少 不足以報) of 314 BCE”; and immediately after the attack on Qi in 284 BCE, it was asserted that “Since Qi was great and Yan was small, the Qi army could be destroyed with the assistance of other states (齊大而燕小 賴諸侯之助).” It is most likely that Qin Kai had stayed as hostage in the Hu land until 284 BCE. He could thereafter have returned home to launch an attack on the Donghu and construct the Yan Long Wall before the year 279 BCE when King Zhao died, Le Yi escaped to Zhao, and the newly conquered Qi land was all lost.16 The Chinese cultural element of the Shaogong’s Yan could have had direct influences upon the region of the five newly established commanderies from 283-222 BCE, i.e., at most for a 61-year period before its downfall.

Yan was attacked by the Hann-Wei-Chu allied forces in 272 BCE, and was attacked by the Qi in 265 BCE. The Yan capital was besieged by the Zhao army in 251 BCE, and Yan was attacked once again by the Zhao in 244 BCE. Qin captured the Yan capital (薊) in 226 BCE and the last Yan king in 222 BCE, and conquered all the remaining states by 221 BCE.

**the Yan long wall reaches xiangping in liaodong**

According to the *Shiji*, a Qin general named Meng Tian conquered the Ordos area in 215 BCE and started constructing the Long Wall. Meng Tian awed and terrified the Xiongnu and, mobilizing 300,000 men, continued the construction work (mostly with tamped earth) until his death six years later in 209 BCE.17 Meng Tian’s wall consolidated and linked other walls that were built by the Warring Period states, including the Yan Long Wall. The *Shiji* records that the Qin Long Wall started at Lintao and extended to Liaodong to a distance of almost ten thousand *li.*

According to the *Shiji*, the Long Wall built by the Yan [sometime between 283-279 BCE], and rebuilt by Meng Tian of Qin sometime between 215-209 BCE, reached “Liaodong.” The *Hanshu* records the suppression of the Lu Wan’s rebellion in 195 BCE by general Zhou Bo, who chased Lu Wan all the way to the Long Wall and established five commandeires, including the Liaodong Commandery. According to the *Hanshu*, all of those five commanderies were located [as of 195 BCE] west of the Qin Long Wall, and none of them was located outside the Wall.18

The crucial question is the location of the “Liao River” and “Liaodong” prior to the Han Wudi’s conquest of Chosun in 108 BCE.Modern historians understand the “Liaodong” appearing in the *Shiji* and *Hanshu* to have been located east of the “modern-day” Liao River, and further identify Liaoyang as Xiangping. If Liaoyang of the modern-day Liaodong had indeed been the eastern terminus of the Yan Long Wall, however, the eastern front of the Yan Kingdom must have been wide open to the hostile Chosun, and then the Yan Long Wall could not have constituted an effective defense system even against either the Hu or the Eastern Hu. 19

**ancient location of the liao river and liaodong**

The author of *Di Li Tu* (地理圖) is Huang Shang (黃裳) of the Southern Song (1127-1279), “a man from Pucheng County, Longqing Prefecture in the east of Lizhou (today’s Jiange County, Sichuan Province). This is one of the eight maps Huang presented to Zhao Kuo (趙擴 sometime between 1189-94), who was then the king of Jia (嘉王) and later became the Southern Song Emperor, Ningzong (寧宗 r.1194-1224). The aim of drawing and presenting this map was to remind the king that half of the territory opened up by the ancestors was still in the hands of the enemy. The map was obtained by a man called Wang Zhiyuan (王致遠, 1193-1257) in Sichuan Province. In 1247, Wang had the map engraved on stone in Suzhou. The tablet is now preserved in the Suzhou Stone Tablet Museum.” 20 Historians have failed to notice the fact that the *Di Li Tu* shows that the present-day Luan River (灤河) was called the Liao River (遼水) in former times, while the present-day Liao River was called the Lesser Liao River (小遼水).

If the map is correct, the “Liaodong” recorded in the *Shiji* could have implied the east of the Luan River. This would mean that the location of not only the Yan Long Wall but also the Qin Long Wall would approximately coincide with the location of the now extant Great Wall. Shanhai’guan, where the Great Wall begins, could have marked the eastern boundary of Liaodong in the final days of Yan and also at the time of Qin and Han prior to the Wudi’s conquest of Chosun in 108 BCE. The Yan Long Wall with its eastern terminus in “Liaodong” would then have constituted a sensible defense system against the Hu, Donghu, and Chosun.

According to the *Shiji*, Han Wudi visited Taishan and then journeyed north by sea to arrive at “Jieshi” in 110 BCE, and thence made a tour “from Liaoxi” to the northern border areas. 21 The Jieshi Mountain is located in the modern-day Changli prefecture to the east of the modern-day Luan River. The *Lüshichunqiu*, completed in 241 BCE, states that the Liao River originates in the Zhishi Mountain and flows into the sea southwest of Liaodong, and the *Huai’nanzi*, completed sometime before 139 BCE, states that the Liao River originates in the Jieshi Mountain and flows into the sea southwest of Liaodong. The area around Jieshi could therefore have been “Liaodong” before the Wudi’s conquest of Chosun. 22 I will examine more closely the records of *Shiji* and other chronicles in Appendix 4.1.

**interactions between Han chinese and yemaek chosun**

After the fall of Yan in 222 BCE, Old Chosun had so grown in strength and territory as to interrupt, in the second century BCE, the contact between the Former Han dynasty and the petty walled town states of Chin (the later period Three Han) located south of the Han River in the Korean Peninsula. In early 109 BCE, the King of Chosun invaded Liaodong [located east of the Luan River] and killed a Han Chinese officer (in charge of the eastern part of Liaodong). Being seriously concerned about a possible alliance of the Chosun with the Xiongnu, Wudi (r.140-87 BCE) launched an attack on Chosun in the autumn. Wudi ordered a 7,000-man Qi army to cross the Gulf of Parhae (Bohai) from Shandong, and a 50,000-man army to march from Liaodong to attack the capital of Chosun. The Han Chinese army went through a series of fierce battles and setbacks, but the King of Chosun was at last killed a year later, in summer of 108 BCE. Soon the capital of Chosun fell to the Han army, enabling Wudi to establish four commanderies, thus “severing the left arm of the Xiongnu (以斷凶奴之左臂).” Within three decades after the Wudi’s conquest, only the Lelang commdandery in the Tae-dong River basin remained (until about 313 CE, together with the Daifang Commandery that was established by the Gongsun rulers in the area south of Lelang sometime between 206 and 220 CE).23

According to the *Shiji*, the General of the Left marched out “from Liaodong,” leading a large number of “Liaodong soldiers” (率遼東士 如淳曰遼東兵多) who may be understood to have been recruited from the Han Chinese who had settled in the area during the presumed Yan-Qin-Han occupation period of 283-108 BCE. According to the *Shiji*, the General of Left was commanding the fierce “Yan-Dai soldiers” (將燕代卒悍). The “Yan-Dai” region traditionally refers to the modern-day Hebei region, up to Shan’haiguan in the east. The contingent force from Liaodong that led the attack was defeated and dispersed (遼東兵先縱敗散), and the captain (卒正) was beheaded. In the meantime, the 7,000-man Qi naval force that had launched a direct attack on the capital of Chosun was also defeated and dispersed. The General of the Left from Liaodong attacked the Chosun army in the “west of the Pei River” (擊朝鮮浿水西軍), but was not able to defeat it to move forward (未能破自前).

According to the *Shiji* and *Hanshu*, the Pei River (浿水爲界)was the pre-Wudi border between the Han Empire and Chosun. The modern-day Luan, Daling, Liao, Yalu, Cheong-cheon, and Tae-dong rivers have been proposed by various scholars as plausible candidates for the Pei River. In order to have a “Chosun army in the west of the Pei River,” however, the most likely candidate may have to be narrowed down to the Daling River: the Yellow Sea in the “west” of the Yalu, Cheong-cheon and the Tae-dong rivers obviously could not accommodate a Chosun army. The Liaodong must then have implied the east of the modern-day Luan River.

Many scholars assume that the Han army had marched from the vicinity of modern Liaoyang because they believe it was the location of Xiangping, the alleged seat of Yan Liaodong commandery. If this is so, then Chosun must have been physically disconnected from the Xiongnu ever since c.283 BCE by the Shaogong’s Yan, that had supposedly occupied modern-day Liaodong, in which case the Wudi’s feat would hardly merit being extolled as the “severing the left arm of the Xiongnu.”

The absurdity of such a reading of historical records, encountered in almost every East Asian history book that happens to touch on this specific episode, may be traced to the intellectual negligence that condoned the misspecification of the location of the Liao River and Liaodong prior to the Han Wudi’s conquest of Chosun. It can be traced, as well, to the careless presumption that the modern-day toponym “Liao River” may be applied retrospectively to ancient times.

Sima Qian (145-86 BCE), contemporaneous with Wudi (r.140-87 BCE), wrote in the *Huozhi Liezhuan* (*Money-Makers*): “Yan situated between the Gulf of Bohai and Jieshi (勃碣之閒), is also a major city (一都會). The region of Yan communicates with Qi and Zhao in the south, borders the lands of the Xiongnu in the northeast (東北邊胡), and extends as far as Shanggu and Liaodong (至遼東), a distant and remote area, sparsely populated and often subject to barbarian raids. On the whole the customs are similar to those of Zhao and Dai (趙代俗相類), but the people are as fierce as hawks… On the north it adjoins the Wuhuan and Fuyu tribes and on the east it controls the profits derived from trade with the Yemaek Chosun and Zhenfan peoples (東綰穢貉朝鮮眞番之利).”24 The year 108 BCE, therefore, may well stand as the accurate historical date for the Han Chinese, for the first time in their history, to enter the lower basin of the modern-day Liao River and the northwestern coast of the Korean Peninsula.

**the origin of wei man: a donghu yan state**

The *Shiji* records that the power of Donghu had reached its peak at the time Maodun (r.209-174 BCE) became Shanyu. According to the Han section of *Dongyi-zhuan* (in the *Weishu* of the *Sanguozhi*), it was shortly after the Donghu were subjugated (c.210 BCE) by the Maodun’s newly emerging Xiongnu Empire that a “Yan” person named Wei Man came to Chosun (sometime after 209 BCE according to the record of *Ye*-*zhuan*, and sometime after 195 BCE according to the record of Han-*zhuan*) with a topknot and wearing barbarian clothes (魋結夷服). Wei Man was entrusted with the custody of refugees in the western frontier district, but he eventually usurped the throne of Chosun.25 Historians assume that Wei Man was a Han Chinese who came from the “Shaogong’s Northern Yan.” If one takes account of the timing of Wei Man’s appearance “in Donghu clothes complete with a topknot,” however, the “Yan state” from which Wei Man came might well have been some other Yan state of Donghu.

According to the *Shiji*, Lu Wan (265-193 BCE) was a childhood friend of Liu Bang. Gaodi had appointed him the King of Yan on September 30, 202 BCE. When Gaodi died on April 25, 195 BCE, Lu sought refugee with the Xiongnu (in the same month) who made him the “king of Donghu.” The Donghu had been conquered by Maodun c.210 BCE. The Lu Wan’s “Donghu” kingdom might well have been the “Yan” state of Donghu. 26

During the hundred years from 337-436 CE, there appeared five Yan states that have been designated as Former Yan (337-70), Later Yan (386-407), Western Yan (385-94), Southern Yan (398-410), and Northern Yan (409-36). Surprisingly, the rulers of the so-called “Northern” Yan, located in the Hebei-Liaoxi area, were Han Chinese, while the rulers of all other Yan states, including the Southern Yan that was located in the Shandong Peninsula, were all Murong Xianbei. The fact that the latter-day Xianbei founders called their states *Yan* suggests the possible existence of an entity called Donghu Yan. The fact that all those transgressors of a sort who did not want to identify themselves as Han Chinese, such as Gongsun Yuan (in 237 CE), An Lushan (in 756) and Shi Siming (in 759), styled themselves the King of *Yan* also suggests the possible existence of a Donghu Yan entity other than the Shaogong’s Northern Yan.

A series of conflicts between the Chosun and Yan people from 323-195 BCE that was recorded in the Chinese chronicles suggests a fairly intimate relationship (mostly in the form of incessant warfare, as usual, between any good neighbors) having been maintained among the peoples of Shaogong’s Northern Yan, some other Yan state of Donghu-Xianbei, and Yemaek Tungusic Chosun.

**avenue of the diffusion of bloomery iron culture**

A foundry site (where already-smelted iron was remelted and cast into products) dated third century BCE was excavated at Xinglong (興隆) County, Hebei, about 100 km northeast of Beijing, outside the Great Wall. Finds include cast-iron molds for implements, charcoal, iron ore, and slag. The inscription on the molds (右 followed by 回 under 亠) is read *You Lin* (右廩) and generally believed to indicate that this was a (Shaogong’s Northern) Yan ironwork site. Remains of the Han period “iron-smelting” were found at Qinghezhen (淸河鎭) in Beijing Municipality. 27

Barnes (1993: 152) contends that the Yan “produced a greater abundance of iron artifacts than Qin, the strongest state,” as manifested by the “iron foundries excavated at several Yan sites,” and also by “the earliest-known iron armor…from Yan.” Barnes contends that the iron culture of China was transmitted to Korea through Shaogong’s Yan. Barnes (ibid: 153) takes the traditional view that “the state of Yan expanded into the lower Manchurian Basin, creating a cultural synthesis from the various elements of nomadic, agricultural and state-level societies,” and believes that the Shaogong’s Northern Yan was “instrumental in initiating the Korean Iron Age from 400 BCE.” 28

Mainland China had adopted the “indirect” method of producing high-carbon [cast] iron in a blast furnace that was decarburized in the process of manufacturing the final iron or steel objects. According to Wagner (2001: 65), there is “no direct evidence” for the use of the bloomery method at any time in China. 29 On the other hand, the people of the Korean Peninsula had adopted the “direct” bloomery method to produce low-carbon [wrought] iron that was carburized in the process of manufacturing the final objects.30 Wagner (2008: 97) states that “there is some evidence that Korean iron technology may have come from the Scythians, and that…the dates which have been proposed range from the 8th to the 3rd century BCE.” Barnes (2007a: 66) contends that the “bloomery iron production on the southern Korean Peninsula must have begun close in time to the establishment of the commanderies, as non-Chinese wrought iron objects from the peninsula and forging technology started to appear in later Middle Yayoi [in Japan].”The bloomery wrought-iron culture of Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula could have arrived through the gently sloping section of the Greater Xing’an Range, and/or following the waterways connecting the Kerulen-Argun, Onon-Shilka, Amur, Nen, Songhua, and Liao rivers that served as an alternative avenue of communication and diffusion of nomadic iron metallurgy. 31 This subject is further investigated in *Addendum 5: “Iron-Making in China and Elsewhere in the World.”*

No blast funace has ever been reported to have been excavated either in Manchuria or in the Korean Peninsula. It is obvious that the Han Chinese (Northern) Yan that had been using the “blast furnace technology” could not have transmitted the “bloomery technology” to the Korean Peninsula.The fact that the Beijing area belonged to the blast furnace culture while the Korean Peninsula and Manchuria belonged to the bloomery culture implies that the Shaogong’s Yan could not have expanded as far as the modern-day Liao River area, “initiating the Korean Iron Age,” as Barnes contends.

3. Interactions between the Murong-Xianbei Yan and the Yemaek Puyeo-Koguryeo

**the Yemaek Puyeo recorded in the dongyi-zhuan**

Puyeo, together with Xiongnu and Koguryeo, was regarded as a potential menace to the Wang Mang’s short-lived (9-23 CE) Xin dynasty.The first recorded instance of the Puyeo king sending envoys to the Later Han court was 49 CE. The *Dongyi-zhuan* gives a 930-letter description of Puyeo. It is the first systematic history on Puyeo appearing in the Chinese dynastic chronicles. The following is a summary. 32

Puyeo borders Xianbei in the west, Yilou in the east, Koguryeo in the south, and Nenjiang (Non’ni River) in the north. Among the Eastern Barbarian states, only Puyeo occupies the great plain, suitable for the planting of five grains. The titles of officials are designated after livestock such as horse-*ka*, cow-*ka*, pig-*ka* and dog-*ka*, lesser officials being in charge of several hundred households and the higher ones several thousand. When holding rites to the Heaven in January, they drink, sing, and dance every day. They offer drinking cups to each other and ceremonially wash every cup. [Modern-day Koreans still maintain this custom.] Since everyone keeps singing on the road, the sounds of singing can be heard all day long. They adore white clothes, wearing caps decorated with gold and silver ornaments, jackets with large sleeves, trousers, and leather shoes. Like the Xiongnu, when an elder brother dies, the younger one takes his wife. Keeping armor and weapons in every house, the [aristocratic 豪民/諸加] *ka* people engage in fighting, while the lower class households supply food for them. They bury the living with the dead, sometimes numbering a hundred people. As the Xianbei and Koguryeo became stronger during the last years of Later Han, Gongsun Du married the daughter of a member of his family to the king of Puyeo. Sometime between 240-8, the Youzhou Governor Guan Qiujian attacked Koguryeo, and dispatched the Governor of Xuantu to Puyeo. Precious jade artifacts are handed down from generation to generation in the royal house. The elders say that their ancestors (from Kori, according to the foundation myth) took refuge in this **Yemaek** land a long time ago.

Murong Hui (r.285-333), at the age of seventeen, invaded Puyeo in 285 and returned with ten thousand prisoners, provoking the Puyeo king, Ui-ryeo, to commit suicide. In 346, Murong Huang, Hui’s son, dispatched three of his sons, including the crown prince, with 17,000 cavalrymen to attack the Puyeo, capturing the king and taking fifty thousand prisoners.33 King Kwaggaeto (r.391-413) of Koguryeo subjugated the Puyeo in 410. The Puyeo royal house surrendered itself to Koguryeo in 494.34

**Yemaek koguryeo: “quick-tempered ferocious pillagers”**

The *Dongyi-zhuan* also gives a brief description of Koguryeo (37 BCE-668 CE) as follows.35 It is located one thousand *li* to the east of Liaodong, bordering the Chosun **Yemaek** in the south, Ok-jeo in the east, and Puyeo in the north, with its capital located below Hwan-do. About 30,000 households live within a radius of two thousand *li*. There are many high mountains and deep valleys, but no plains or fertile farmlands. Even with their utmost efforts at farming, they are always short of foodstuffs, and a moderate diet became their custom. And yet the people are fond of constructing palaces and decorating ceremonial halls. They construct big buildings around their houses, and hold services to the deities of land and grain, divine stars, and ancestor deities. They are quick tempered and ferocious, and fond of pillaging. Since the Koguryeo people are a variety of the Puyeo, their language and customs are similar to those of Puyeo, but their clothing and temperament are somewhat different. Their king comes from one of the five [aristocratic] clans, and always takes his queen from a specific clan. The upper class people (坐食者), numbering 10,000, never work in the fields, and the lower class people carry in grains, fish and salt from distant places to supply them. Men and women gather together and enjoy singing and dancing every night. They brew good wine. They appear to run rather than walk. They hold rites to Heaven in October. They construct tombs by piling up stones, spending enormous resources. They are strong and adept in warfare, producing excellent bows (called **Maek**-bows), and subjugating all the Ok-jeo and Eastern **Ye** people. Their horses are small and adept at climbing mountains. Wang Mang (9-23 CE) attempted to use the Koguryeo army in attacking the Hu (Xiongnu), but the “*Ko*-guryeo” soldiers merely pillaged local provinces. The Koguryeo king [Yuri r.19 BCE-18 CE] was killed. Wang Mang decreed all under heaven to call the “*Superior*-guryeo” thenceforth the “*Base*-guryeo.” The king [Dae-mu-sin r.18-44] sent tribute [to the Later Han court] in 32 CE, and began to use the title of king. During the years 105-25, the Koguryeo king [Tae-jo r.53-146] frequently invaded Liaodong and pillaged. During 125-67, the Koguryeo army invaded and pillaged Liaodong again. On their way to attack Xianping, the Koguryeo army killed the Governor of Daifang, and captured the wife and children of the Governor of Lelang. In 172-7, as Gongsun Du consolidated his power in Liaodong, the king of Koguryeo dispatched an army to help him destroy bandits. Sometime between 205-21, however, Gongsun Kang sent an army to attack Koguryeo. In 238, when Sima Yi (懿) led an army to attack Gongsun Yuan, the Koguryeo king [Dong-cheon r.227-48] helped the Wei army by dispatching several thousand soldiers. In 242, the Koguryeo king pillaged Xianping.

Gongsun Du began his career as a petty official in the Xuantu commandery, and was appointed Governor of Liaodong in 190 by Dong Zhuo (d.192).Du managed to establish a separatist regime, and launched attacks against Koguryeo in the east and Wuhuan in the west. When Du died in 204, his son Kang succeeded him. The Gongsun rulers annexed Lelang commandery, and established the Daifang commandery from the southern portion of Lelang. Koguryeo continually fought against the Gongsun rulers. When Kang died in 221, his younger brother Gong succeeded him. 36 In 228, Gong was replaced by (Kang’s son) Yuan, who proclaimed himself King of Yan in 237 but was killed fighting the Wei expeditionary force in 238.37 The Lelang and Daifang commanderies were taken over by the Cao Cao’s Wei (220-265), and then by the Western Jin (265-316).

In 246, King Dong-cheon fought against the 10,000-man Wei army, leading 20,000 infantry and mounted soldiers. According to the *Samguk-sagi*, 5,000 of the Koguryeo soldiers engaged in that battle were the iron-armored cavalrymen that must have looked like the cavalrymen in the 4th century Koguryeo mural paintings of the An-ak Tomb No. 3.38

The hereditary warrior aristocracy in Koguryeo did not work in the fields; it devoted itself to combat, raiding neighbors and extracting tributes in order to supplement deficient resources from its own mountainous terrain. The *Dongyi-zhuan* records that the Ok-jeo people of the Eastern Sea coast carried cloth, fish, salt, and other marine products on their backs to Koguryeo, a distance of more than 200 miles.

In Puyeo and Koguryeo, kings were at first chosen by an elective process, alternating the kingship among important tribal leaders. (The same practice appeared also in Silla.) When the right to the throne became permanently secured by a single royal clan in Koguryeo, the system of succession was often lateral. Upon the death of King Koguk-cheon (r.179-97), his younger brother married the widowed queen and became King San-sang (r.197-227). The practice of marrying a sister-in-law originated in the custom of Puyeo and Xiongnu. The father-to-son succession is recorded in Koguryeo from the reign of San-sang. Even then, the queen was drawn from an important non-royal ruling clan. The Puyeo and the Koguryeo were not nomads, and yet they had retained nomadic social formations with a martial flavor, and maintained an aristocratic warrior class whose main occupation had been the practice of war.39

**Murong-xianbei yan fighting Yemaek koguryeo**

During the third century, Koguryeo was still entrenched in the Hun-Yalu river valleys. In the late third century, the Murong Xianbei moved down into the Liao River basin and cut off Lelang from Western Jin. The *Samguk-sagi* records frequent armed conflicts between the Koguryeo and the Murong Xianbei from 293 to 296. In 311, the Xiongnu sacked the Jin capital at Luoyang, and Koguryeo took over the Lelang commandery in 313. In 319, Koguryeo, in coalition with two Xianbei tribes, Yuwen and Duan, attacked Murong Hui (r.285-333), but was defeated by the troops led by Hui and his son Huang. Hui let another son, Ren, defend Liaodong. 40 In 320, the Koguryeo army attacked Liaodong but was beaten back.

When Murong Huang succeeded his father in 333, his younger brother, Ren, rebelled in the Liaodong area. According to the *Zizhi Tongjian*, one of Huang’s officers, named Tong Shu, a Han Chinese from Liaodong, sided with Ren after Huang’s initial defeat in 333, and then, when Ren was crushed by Huang in 336, fled to Koguryeo. Tong Shu appears as one of the two military aids-de-camp (帳下督) in the mural painting of a Koguryeo royal mausoleum (on the south wall of the western side-entrance at An-ak Tomb No. 3, Hwang-hae-do) with a 68-letter inscription over his head (頭上墨書) reporting that he had held various high-ranking positions and died incumbent in 357 at the age of 69.41

The armed conflicts between the Xianbei and the Koguryeo continued from 339 to 342. There is, however, no record of conflicts during the 41-year period between 343-84. According to the *Samguk-sagi*, Koguryeo mounted an attack on Liaodong in 385, fifteen years after the fall of Former Yan.

In 392, King Kwang-gae-to (r.391-413) mounted an attack on the Qidan in the north, and brought back 10,000 Koguryeo people previously captured and taken away by the Qidan army. Koguryeo seems to have occupied the Liaodong area sometime between 392-9. According to the *Jinshu*, the king of Later Yan (Murong Sheng, r.398-401) invaded Liaodong and took away five thousand households to “Liaoxi” in 400. According to the *Samguk-sagi* (corroborated by the *Zizhi Tongjian*), the Koguryeo army invaded an area north-east of Longcheng in 402, and the king of Later Yan (Murong Xi, r.401-7) “invaded Liaodong” (but failed) in 405. According to the *Jinshu*, the Koguryeo army had invaded the Yan Commandery (寇燕郡) sometime before 405. The Deuk-heung-ri Tomb of a Koguryeo dignitary named Zhen (鎭 331-408) contains the record that he held the position of Governor of Youzhou. The *Samguk-sagi* records armed conflicts between Koguryeo and Later Yan in 404 and 406. The *Jinshu* also records that Murong Xi attacked Koguryeo sometime after 405. Peace was restored after the downfall of the Murong rulers in 407 by the coup staged by a person of Koguryeo origin, Ko Un (高雲), whose position (天王位) was filled two years later by his Han Chinese general Feng Ba, the founder of Northern Yan. 42

We see the replay of an intimate relationship (i.e., armed conflicts) between the people called “the Yan” and the Yemaek Tungus. The name of the Yemaek Tungus antagonist changed from Chosun to Koguryeo, but the name of the opponent remained identical, “Yan.”

Farris (1998: 77) notes that the Xianbei learned to use the stirrups c.300 CE, and “the first Koreans to use the horse in combat were soldiers of Koguryeo doing battle with the Xianbei.” The technique of using stirrups seems to have entered the Korean Peninsula by courtesy of the incessant fighting between the Murong-Xianbei Yan and the Yemaek Koguryeo.

According to the Ye Section of *Dongyi-zhuan*, Ki-ja (Jizi) in Chosun had formulated the Eight Clauses of Instruction and educated the people. The incessant fighting between the Xianbei and the Yemaek Tungus seems to have generated a strong enough cultural assimilation between these two peoples as to find in the *History of Liao* the statement that the Oidan Liao, the descendants the Yuwen-Xianbei, had originated from the old Chosun land, having the [identical] customs and tradition of “the Ki-ja’s (Jizi’s) Eight Clauses of Instruction.”43

The *Samguk-sagi* and *Samguk-yusa* state that the mother of Chumong, the founder of Koguryeo, became pregnant by the sunlight that clasped her and cast its rays over her body. The *Dongyi-zhuan* notes a similar story for the founder of Puyeo. The “light conception motif” was shared also by the Tuoba-Xianbei as well as the Qidan-Xianbei. The *Weishu* states that the mother of Tuoba Gui, the founder of Northern Wei dynasty, became pregnant after she dreamed of the sunlight coming into her room, and also that Empress Gao of Xiaowen’di (r.471-99) gave birth to Xuanwu’di (r.499-515) after dreaming of sun light chasing her body. The *Liaoshi* states that the mother of Abaoji, the founder of Qidan-Xianbei Liao dynasty, became pregnant after she dreamed that the sun sank into her lap. The Mongols (of the Qidan-Xianbei provenance) believed that Chinggis Khan was conceived “by a ray of light which penetrated through the rooflight of the tent.”44 The Murong-Xianbei and Koguryeo had also shared the “descent from heaven motif” for the founder’s forefather. 45

Appendix 4.1. Location of Ancient Liao River and Yan Long Wall

**liadong: east of the modern-day luan river**

On the basis of the following historical records, Yoon (1986: 43-58) has contended that the present-day Luan River was formerly the Liao River prior to the conquest of Chosun by Han Wudi in 108 BCE. 46

According to the *Shiji*, Shihuangdi’s army “captured the Yan capital of Ji” in 226 BCE; then the King of Yan “took control (收) of the region of Liaodong and made himself king of it”; the Qin army attacked Liaodong in 222 BCE and captured the last king of Yan; Shihuangdi journeyed to Jieshi in 215 BCE, where “he had an inscription carved on the gate of Jieshi”; his son made a trip to Jieshi in the very first year (209 BCE) of his accession to the throne and “added inscriptions to all the stones that the First Emperor had earlier set up”; and the Second Emperor “went as far as (遂至) Liaodong and then returned to the capital.” The Jieshi Mountain is located in the modern-day Changli prefecture to the east of the modern-day Luan River. Yoon has contended that the area around Jieshi was “Liaodong,” where the last king of Yan was captured, and hence the Liao River could have been the modern-day Luan River.47

According to the topology section of the *Weishu* (History of Northern Wei), Ying-*zhou* (營州) of Northern Wei (386-534), with its seat at Helongcheng (和龍城), had, as of 525-34 CE, six commanderies (郡), including Liaodong, Lelang (that included Daifang county), and Changli (that included Longcheng). The Liaodong commandery is further recorded to have included Xiangping that was maintained throughout the Former Han, Later Han, and Western Jin period, abolished thereafter, but reestablished in 520-24. As of 520-34, Koguryeo was occupying the modern-day Liaodong area, and Ying-*zhou* was apparently located in the modern-day Liaoxi area. 48

According to the geography section of the *Jinshu*, Cao Cao’s Wei established a High Commissioner for Dongyi Affairs ([護]東夷校尉), and let him reside at Xiangping [before and after the destruction of Gongsun family in 238], and divided five commanderies (Liaodong, Changli, Xuantu, Daifang and Lelang) to establish Ping-*zhou*, that was later merged into You-*zhou*. The *Jinshu* further records that, in October 276 CE, Western Jin divided the five commanderies to establish Ping-*zhou* that governed 26 counties and 18,100 households. 49 Yoon (1986: 313) has contended that, according to the *Hou Hanshu*, Xiangping county belonged to the Liaodong commandery in Ping-*zhou* that was located to the east of the Luan River. 50*Di Li Tu* indeed shows that Ping-*zhou* was located to the east of the modern-day Luan River.

**shaogong’s yan relocates its capital to southwest**

The Shaogong’s Yan remained confined to the small Beijing area hemmed in on the north and east by the Donghu and Dongyi, on the west by the Xiongnu, and on the south by the militant Qi, and it was only during the reign of King Zhao (r.312-279 BCE) that the Yan had supposedly burst out of its small confined area, greatly expanding its territory toward the northeast. And yet King Zhao somehow decided, presumably at the very peak of Yan’s military might and in the midst of unprecedented northeasterly conquest, to move his court in the opposite direction to Wuyang (武陽) near Yixian (易縣), located southwest of Jicheng, purportedly to construct a new capital in a much grander scale.51 It is, therefore, extremely unlikely that the territory of Shaogong’s Northern Yan could ever have extended much beyond the modern-day Luan River or the Great Wall now extant.

Shim (2002: 302) notes that the “post-Qin people still considered the area in the Luan and Daling River valleys as Chosun.” Shim quotes *Huai’nanzi*: “At the eastern end [of Han], beyond Jieshi Mountain, [we] pass through Chosun, a state of benevolent and great people.” *Yantielun* records that the state of Yan is said to have been blocked by Jieshi Mountain. The Sima Qian’s *Shiji* also records that Yan was located between the Parhae (Bohai) and Jieshi Mountain.52

According to the *Shiji*, the long wall, built by Yan c.283- 279 BCE and rebuilt by Qin c.215-209 BCE, reached “Xiangping in Liaodong.” Many scholars assume that Xiangping (襄平), the eastern terminus of the Yan Long Wall recorded in the *Shiji*, was the seat of Yan’s Liaodong Commandery, and further specify the modern-day Liaoyang as the location of ancient Xiangping. They ignore the fact that Xiangping and Liaoyang (遼陽) were clearly recorded as separate entities in the *Hanshu* and *Hou Hanshu.* 53

**Archeological findings from the so-called “yan long wall” sites**

Chinese archeologists typically imagine that the Yan Long Wall runs an east-west path, commencing from the vicinity of Doulun in Inner Mongolia (about 250 km north of Beijing), going eastward along the far northern frontier of Youbeiping, and passing to the north of Chifeng and Aohan, north of Fuxin. Remains of several separate lines of fortifications are found from the Karachin East Wing Banner (southwest of Chifeng) in the west to the Fuxin district (northeast of Chaoyang) in the east. There are two roughly parallel lines of fortifications: one running 20 km north of the small Chifeng plain, attributed to the Qin period; and one running 30 km south of the small Chifeng plain, regarded as the Yan Long Wall. There is also a third line of fortifications further south which is regarded as the Han Long Wall, although only the Qin was recorded to have been the *Builder of the Long Wall* and the Han was recorded to have been the *Builder of the Forts and Fences* (秦築長城 漢起塞垣) by the chroniclers such as Fan Ye (范曄 398-446), the compiler of *Hou Hanshu*. Many people imagine that the walls extend further to the west and east.54

The lines of fortifications (built with tamped earth and stone), alleged to be the “long walls” constructed by the Yan or Qin, are comprised of lookout posts, ramparts, ditches, small and large forts, beacon towers, and stone walls blocking mountain passes. The stone walls are mostly built on hills and high mountain peaks. The largest forts appear on both banks of the Laoha River. Archeological excavations since the mid-1970s in the section of the wall near Chifeng reveal the presence of the Upper Xiajiadian and the Ordos bronze cultures. According to Di Cosmo, both outside and inside this line of fortifications the only cultural remains are non-Chinese. The whole area was inhabited exclusively by non-Chinese, mostly pastoral people. Di Cosmo states that “the original dwellers may have been Donghu, that is, a non-Chinese nomadic group that the written sources place in the northeast and against whom the state of Yan fought.”Di Cosmo further states: “the walls were not built to separate steppe and sown, nomad and farmer. [They were built] to establish a strong military presence…to control the movement of people.” There is no evidence that the walls protected the Han Chinese settlements in areas traditionally inhabited by alien peoples engaged mainly in pastoral activities. We still do not know “the precise function of the walls,” nor “what they were actually defending,” but clearly they served “to defend the surrounding non-agricultural territory” from some threat. 55

The sole basis for attributing the line of fortifications running from Karachin Banner to Fuxin to the work of the Yan (dating to no later than 299 BCE) seems to be the “long wall” mentioned in the *Shiji*. Since most historians believe that the ancient Liaodong and the Liaodong Commandery established by the Yan were located east of the modern-day Liao River, they imagine, in the absence of conclusive archeological evidence, that the Qin Long Wall (and by the same token, the Yan Long Wall) ran a good deal farther north and east than the Great Wall now extant, crossing the modern-day Liao River.

Oddly, the PRC Han Chinese archeologists cannot bring themselves to a halt even at the modern-day Liaoyang (identified as Xiangping, the eastern terminus recorded in the *Shiji*) in Liaodong. They claim, on the basis of such questionable evidence as the “Yan-style” roof tiles, the discovery of the remains of the Yan Long Wall in places beyond the modern-day Liaodong, even as far down as northwestern Korea. In spite of the fact that there exists no extant walls or towers south of Shenyang, they believe that the Yan Long Wall curves to the south at Tieling, passing between Fushun and modern Shenyang, running southward west of Huanren (桓仁), passing the Yalu River, and arriving at the mouth of the Dae-nyeong River (大寧江 that joins the mouth of Cheong-cheon River). Byington (2003: 91) states that “Chinese scholars believe this to be the eastern terminus of Yan’s long wall based on finds of Yan-style roof tiles” near Pak-cheon (博川), never mind the fact that the undated remains of a wall along the bank of the Dae-nyeong River was apparently “built to defend against an attack from the north.”

As early as 2004, the PRC government had finished construction of a massive “replica” of the alleged Ming Great Wall segment (with the official Eastern Terminus) at the Hu Mountain, Dandong City, facing the Yalu River. Though belatedly, in April 2009 after a two-year (ex-post) government mapping *study*, the PRC State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping (國家測量局) and the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (國家文物局) officially announced that the Great Wall spans 8,850 km instead of the length that had been commonly estimated at about 5,000 km (stretching from Jiayu Pass to Shan’haiguan). The newly-mapped section that allegedly began to be built in 1469 now officially commences at the mouth of the Yalu River. Apparently, the *Bian Qiang* (邊牆), “the makeshift fences (障塞) made of earth, stones, bricks, and woods,” interspersed with gate towers (關門), “constructed from 1437-42 and 1479-81 by the Ming military households in Liaodong (屯田軍士) to defend the Liaodong area from the intrusion of the Mongols and the Nüzhens,” was taken as the newly “discovered” section of the Ming Great Wall. The makeshift fences metamorphosed into the “brick” Long Wall in the hands of modern PRC construction companies. The official China Daily reported that the mapping project would continue for another 18 months in order to *establish* the sections built during the Yan-Qin-Han dynasties --- though the maps for alleged Yan-Qin-Han Long Walls that reach down below the Cheong-Cheon River area right above Pyung-yang, the modern-day capital of North Korea, had already been published together with the PRC map for the Ming Great Wall.56

If we take the PRC view, since the Yan-Qin long wall had already reached the northwestern corner of the Korean Peninsula down to the Dae-nyung River, the so-called Wudi’s conquest of Chosun (that had its capital at Pyung-yang) in 108 BCE must have been a relatively simple excursion within a radius of 70 km. Furthermore, the vanquished rulers of Chosun must have been the pure blooded Han Chinese, i.e., the scions of Wei Man, who is assumed to have come from the Shaogong’s Yan around 200 BCE.

Yan had neither a fearsome Shihuang’di, nor such an assiduous general as Meng Tian (with concrete records on his wall-construction efforts), or a tyrannical centralized autocracy (that can mobilize enormous manpower) either. Nevertheless, it has long been taken for granted that the Yan Long Wall, reaching as far down to the Yalu River or further south to the Dae-nyeong River, did exist; and Chinese historians keep drawing a preposterously long wall on maps without ever questioning the feasibility of such a long wall being constructed in a few years by “the smallest and the weakest” among the Zhou states (that had, in the words of Sima Qian, barely managed to stay in existence 幾滅者數矣 surrounded by the Hu-barbarians and the strong Qi-Jin states 崎嶇彊國之閒). Not only the PRC government, but most Western experts as well endorse the claims of Chinese archeologists that have never been substantiated by any extant historical documents.

**the liadong commandery of Former han and Northern wei**

Yoon has contended that the toponym Liao River was shifted from the modern Luan River to the modern Liao River after the Wudi’s conquest of Chosun in 108 BCE.57

According to the *Weishu*, Koguryeo King Chang-su (r.413-91) first sent an envoy to the Northern Wei court during the reign of Tuoba Tao (Tai Wudi r.423-52), and the Wei court bestowed on him a lengthy set of titles including “High Commissioner for Dongyi Affairs, Duke of Opening Country in Liaodong Commandery (遼東郡開國公), King of Koguryeo.” Wei bestowed the almost identical set of titles, always including the title “Duke of Opening Country in Liaodong Commandery,” to subsequent Koguryeo kings until its downfall. The *Weishu* further records that Pyung-yang was located 1,000 *li* southeast (東南) of “Liao,” and Koguryeo’s border reached the old Puyeo in the north and a small sea in the south, its territory being spread over 2,000 *li* east-west, and “1,000 *li* north-south.”58 According to the *Weishu*, then, it is obvious that Pyung-yang could not have been located 1,000 *li* south or southeast of the modern-day Liaodong, and the “Liao” appearing in the *Weishu* must have implied the area around the modern-day Luan River. The *Weishu* was compiled by Wei Shou (魏收, 505-72) and others (taking advantage of the various Wei chronicles compiled under the Tuoba-Xianbei rulers during 398-471) under the auspices of the first Xianbei emperor of Northern Qi (550-77) during 551-4. The compilers, therefore, must have been relatively free from the Sinocentric ideology.

According to the *Weishu*, Si prefecture (司州) with its seat at Ye (鄴城) had 12 commanderies (領郡十二), 371,675 households, and 1,459,835 persons. Ding prefecture (定州) had 5 commanderies, 177,501 households, and 834,274 persons, and Taiyuan commandery of Bing prefecture (太原郡, 幷州) had 10 counties, 45,006 households, and 482,140 persons. By way of contrast, the Ying prefecture (營州) had six commanderies including Liaodong but, surprisingly, had a paltry 1,021 households and 4,664 registered population.59 The Ying prefecture of Northern Wei seems to have been confined, as of 525-34, to the “no-man’s lands” somewhere between the Luan River and Chaoyang on the upper Daling River in modern Liaoxi.

According to the *Hanshu*, the Liaodong commandery (of You prefecture 幽州) had eighteen counties including Xiangping (襄平), 55,972 households, and 272,539 persons during the Former Han period. 60 According to the *Weishu*, however, Liaodong commandery (noted as had been established by Qin, later abolished, “reestablished” during 520-4) had only two counties including Xiangping (recorded to have been maintained throughout the Former Han, Later Han and Western Jin period), and a mere 131 households and 855 persons. The Liaodong commandery appearing in the *Hanshu* seems to imply the administrative unit established by Han Wudi with its seat at Xiangping and located in the east of modern-day Liao River, while the Liaodong commandery appearing in the *Weishu* seems to imply the administrative unit (complete with Xiangping) established “in name only” by the Northern Wei rulers (in 520-4) and located in the east of modern-day Luan River. 61

The twelfth century *Di Li Tu* suggests that the traditional usage of Liao River for the modern Luan River continued for a long time even after the Wudi’s conquest of Chosun, while the present-day Liao River had already begun to be called Lesser Liao River, allowing Liaodong to imply the east of the modern Luan River some times (as recorded in the *History of Northern Wei*), or the east of the modern Liao River at other times (as recorded in the *Hanshu*). The above historical records seem to be consistent with the thesis suggested by the *Di Li Tu*.

**Lower xiajiadian tradition at the Beijing area**

The proto-Altaic speech community of Donghu- Xianbei and Dongyi-Tungus, sharing the tradition of comb-patterned pottery and broad-bladed bronze daggers, were all connected with the Neolithic Hongshan culture (c.5000-3000 BCE) that maintained a clear continuity with the Early Bronze Age Lower Xiajiadian culture (c.2200-1600 BCE).

The burials of Lower Xiajiadian culture were found at the Liulihe site, about 10 km southeast of Fangshan and about 45 km southwest of Beijing. It is believed to have been the location of the first capital of Shaogong’s Northern Yan (1045-222 BCE). Guo (1995b: 178) contends that the cultural traditions of Lower Xiajiadian constituted the “pre-Yan culture,” and “were still kept in the Yan State culture of Western Zhou.” According to Guo (ibid: 148), the character for *Yan* “is found on oracle bones, suggesting that the state of Yan coexisted with the Shang.” This ancient Yan state could have been the ancestor of Donghu Yan.62

The first half of Shaogong’s Yan was contemporaneous with the Bronze Age Upper Xiajiadian culture (1200-600 BCE). The conspicuous regional characteristics around Beijing and northern Hebei include the bronze weapons and ornaments of the so-called Northern Complex traditions, a Sinocentric euphemism for the Hu-Donghu-Dongyi tradition. According to Byington (2003: 39), the “majority of the population of the Yan state, if not the capital city, did not derive their heritage from the Central Plains but were instead indigenous, having made their home in the Beijing region and farther north for a very long time.” The indigenous population, Byington (2003: 42) states, “continued to cohabit this region surrounding the Yan capital at Liulihe and comprised a considerable portion of the population of the Yan state. It is likely, however, that the more remote regions…remained for a time beyond the direct administrative control of the government of the Yan marquis.” 63

Archeologists have long recognized a distinct northern character associated with the culture of the Zhou-period Yan state. 64 According to Janhunen (1996: 224), “it is unlikely that the ancient kingdom of Yan would originally have contained any Sinitic elements” and “ethnic foundation of the kingdom of Yan… may have incorporated Pre-Proto-Mongolic elements in its ethnic composition.”Janhunen states that the formation of the ancient kingdom of Yan “in the territory of the modern Hebei Province in parallel with the Zhou dynasty…took place in an ethnic environment dominated by elements other than Han Chinese. … The well-documented later involvement of the Murong and Tuoba in the region might…mean that this was the very homeland of the Xianbei, not a region which they occupied secondarily as alien conquerors (ibid: 194).”

**The So-called “Ming” Knife Coin** **(明刀錢)**

The production of pointed bronze knife coins (靑銅尖首折刀幣) with a smooth curve (弧形) down the back began some time in the Middle Zhou period (c.770-600 BCE). They are the closest in style to genuine knives. 65

The so-called “*Ming*” knife coin does not have a pointed tip, and it does have a pointed or mildly curved back. It has a pictograph that might be read as *Ming*. The “*Ming*” knife coins do not bear the mint name. These are by far the most common of all knife coins and must have been cast in vast numbers. They are found over a wide area of Liaoxi, Liaodong, the northwestern region of the Korean Peninsula (above the Cheong-cheon River), and the Hebei region around Beijing. 66 The manufacturing of *Ming* knife coins occurred during the period c.300-100 BCE that belongs to the dawn of the Iron Age, and overlaps almost exactly with the vortical period beginning with the Qin Kai’s exploits and construction of the Yan Long Wall in 283-279 BCE, witnessing the Meng Tian’s construction of the Qin Long Wall in 215-209 BCE, and ending with the Han Wu-di’s conquest of Chosun in 108 BCE.

There are, however, two distinct types of the so-called *Ming* knife coins, the first with a “Yan” pictograph and the second with a “*Ming*” pictograph. Both types have many different reverse inscriptions with no indications of the mint name or denominations. According to Zhang (2004), the knife coin with pictograph “**(0))**” ---which depicts an eye and should be read as Yan (燕, 匽)--- was manufactured in the Yan State, and the knife coin with pictograph “**(0**” ---which depicts “brightness” and should be read as *Ming* 明, indicating the *Ming* Barbarians of Ki-ja (Jizi 箕子之**明**夷), i.e., the Chosun State--- was manufactured in Chosun. This may suggest that the bronze knife coins with the *Ming*-pictograph were manufactured, together with narrow-bladed bronze daggers, by the Yemaek Chosun (called the *Ming* Barbarians) in the Liaodong area and the northwestern region of the Korean Peninsula. The knife coins with the Yan-pictograph could have been manufactured by the Donghu-Xianbei Yan in the Chifeng-Dalinghe area of Liaoxi. It remains a conundrum that the excavation sites of both types of knife coins overlap considerably.

According to Shelach (2009: 31), “the large scale of local metal production in the Chifeng region during the late second and early first millennium is attested…by evidence of large-scale copper ore mines dated to the Upper Xiajiadian period [1200-600 BCE].” A large mine was found at the Dajing site, some 8 km north of the Xilamulun River, that yielded evidence of smelting and casting. Sehlach (1999: 161) states that “seven pieces of molds found at this site suggest that tool production accompanied the large-scale [copper] mining carried out at the Dajing site.” 67

**no evidence of pre-wudi chinese culture in liaodong**

No dynastic chronicles had recorded that the Chinese had ever consturcted long walls between Xiangping and Dae-nyung River. There is no archeological evidence for the Yan-Qin-Han long walls around the modern-day Liao River region or in the Korean Peninsula, except some objects such as the pieces of roof tiles or potteries that are claimed to be in the “Yan or Han style” by the Chinese scholars. Neither is there any convincing archeological evidence of the Han Chinese civilization in the modern-day Liaodong area that can be dated to the periods of 283-222 BCE or 206-108 BCE, the two centuries between the Qin Kai’s exploits and the Han Wudi’s conquest of Chosun.

The relics excavated at the northwestern peninsular sites around modern Pyung-yang maintain the tradition of non-Chinese narrow-bladed bronze dagger culture not only during the century after Wei Man’s usurpation (c.200-108 BCE), but even during the century after the Wudi’s conquest of Chosun (108-0 BCE). According to the PRC view, the Pyung-yang area in the northwestern corner of the Korean Peninsula must have been placed “right below” the Yan Kingdom (complete with the Yan Long Wall with its eastern terminus at the Dae-nyung River) and then “right below” the Han Empire during the 200-year period between 300-108 BCE. Archeologists, however, have failed to find evidence from the Lelang sites to suggest any conspicuous inflow of the Han Chinese culture even after 108 BCE prior to the early first century CE. Instead, they have found that the burial remains of the ruling class for the period c.200-0 BCE were rather interspersed with the so-called “Northern Complex” traditions.68

At the northwestern peninsular sites, horse fittings, bronze hubcaps-bells-fixtures for chariots, bronze daggers-spears-arrowheads, and iron swords-spears-axes were found at the Early Iron Age wood-coffin pit burials (which lack stone slabs and linings). An inscription on one weapon from a pit burial dates it to 221 BCE (before the Wei Man’s arrival c.200 BCE), and another inscription on a silver seal from a pit burial dates it to c.128 BCE (after the Wei Man’s arrival but before the Wudi’s Lelang period).69 The burial remains for the period c.200-0 BCE included the sunbeam-cross motifs (十字日光文), copper cauldron (銅鍑), a bronze dagger with twisted birds-shaped hilt (觸角式銅劍), and animal-shaped ornaments (銀製杏葉) of the Xiongnu tradition. 70 The burial remains of the early Lelang period (108 BCE-0) maintained the culture of the non-Chinese narrow-bladed bronze dagger and fine-lined bronze mirror, although a greater amount of iron swords and wrought iron tools have been found in wooden-framed tombs. Y. Oh (2006: 63) states that “in the Lelang tombs, the burial of Northern style artifacts [such as the gold buckle with turquoise inlays from Seok-am-ri No. 9 Lelang tomb] ceased only by the early first century CE.” 71 According to Y. Oh (ibid: 85), the burial remains excavated at the Lelang sites do not show any significant Han Chinese influences until after the early first century CE, and even after that time the so-called Han Chinese style observed at the Lelang sites finds no directly corresponding counterparts in mainland China.72

The established interpretations of the history of Yan and Chosun beg the question of what the term “Liaodong” means. Scholars have failed to pay due attention to the simple fact that “Liaodong” is a toponym dependent on its relations to the Liao River. Only with the correct specification of the location of the ancient Liao River, can one avoid creating anomalous episodes in East Asian history.

In his archeological study on the Northern Frontiers of China during the first millennium BCE, Shelach (2009: 14) states that “the Zhou states [i.e., the Shaogong’s Northern Yan] seem to have expanded in the northeast as far as the Beijing area…and perhaps even further east to the area of the modern city of Qinhuangdao.”

<http://www.WontackHong.com/homepage1/data/1060.pdf>

<http://www.HongWontack.com/homepage1/data/1060.pdf>

<http://www.HongWontack.pe.kr/homepage1/data/1060.pdf>

1. See Wontack Hong, *East Asian History: A Tripolar Approach*, Seoul: Kudara, 2012, Chapter 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)