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LEADERS OF THE INVASION FORCE:

Mimaki-Iri-Biko (Sujin), Puyeo Warriors, or the Paekche

Ryal Family—The Evolution of the Egami-Ledyard-Hong Propositions

A. Mimaki-Iri-Biko

Egami (1964) observes that the archeological materials of the early tombs exhibit a magical, ceremonial and agricultural character whereas those of the late tombs (now including the traditional middle-period tombs) exhibit many affinities with Korean tomb artifacts; this similarity is especially notable in the common existence of a strong equestrian orientation, the mutual fondness for ornamentation with precious metals, and common styles of weapons, clothing and armor. Egami emphasizes that the change from “early” to “late” culture was relatively sudden, and he places the break between “early” and “late” materials in “the middle of the second half of the fourth century.” According to Egami, the culture of the late phase is princely and aristocratic, and its wide dissemination in Japan suggests subjugation by military force.

At this point, in an attempt to ground his thesis in historical sources, Egami identifies Mimaki-iri-biko 御間城入彦 from Mimana 任那 as the leader of the horseriding invasion force. Wei-zhi 魏志 records that there were Kings of Chin 辰 in south Korea who ruled in the state of Yueh-shi 月氏國 in Ma-han and brought under their sway twelve out of a total of twenty-four Han states. Egami believes that the horserider invasion of Japan was led by Mimaki-iri-biko who was one of the descendants of the third century Chin Kings, and that those Chin kings had some connection with Puyeo 夫餘 or Koguryeo. According to Egami, it was Mimaki-iri-biko [Sujin 崇神] who crossed over to Kyūshū from Mimana of south Korea and occupied it, while it was his descendant Homuda-wake 日向王 who carried out the conquest eastward to the Kinki 近畿 region and established the Yamato Wa. A flaw in Egami’s

argument is his contention that Mimaki also belonged to the horseriding conquerors, while archeologically it appears that only Homuda-wake 品陀和氣 could have. Because Egami places Mimaki in the early fourth century, he has to backdate the invasion to around that time, at least half a century or more before the appearance of the archeological discontinuity. If Egami's hypothesis is accurate, we should be able to observe an introduction of the Late Tomb materials in the early fourth century, at least in Kyūshū where Egami contends the invasion began. According to Egami (1964), such evidence constitutes a missing link which will certainly be found in the future. After a critical evaluation of Egami's theory, Kirkland (1981) states that: "what remains of Egami's theory is nothing more than his initial assumption of an abrupt, radical change in the nature of Japanese society in the late Kofun period," though Kirkland himself has a reservation even on this aspect.

B. Puyeo Warriors

Ledyard (1975), however, has suggested, on the basis of Korean and Japanese historical materials, that Paekche conquered the Yamato region sometime after taking over the southern part of Korea in A.D. 369. That is, Ledyard has tried to integrate the archeological argument for an invasion with the historical records of the same period, avoiding the anachronistic elements of Egami's thesis.

Ledyard (1975) first focuses on the passages in Nihongi (NI: 248-250) which tell of a large-scale Japanese invasion of Korea that supposedly began in A.D. 369. He does not believe that Japan was itself centralized enough at the time to conduct such an overseas campaign. Ledyard suggests that the military activities described in Nihongi are not the work of the Japanese but rather of the Paekche 百濟 people. That is, the Paekche pushed into the southern part of Korea in A.D. 369 and shortly thereafter continued on to Kyūshū (passing through the Mimana 任那 [Imna] area), from where they subsequently conquered the Yamato region, establishing the first central authority in Japan under Homuda-wake 譽田別 by the end of the fourth century. According to Ledyard, as the foreign conquerors were gradually absorbed by the native population, the legends of the Paekche were reworked to fit the indigenous perspective. Thus Paekche's conquest of southern Korea in A.D. 369 was recorded in Nihongi as a Japanese invasion of the area, and Paekche's campaign pushing east from Kyūshū became the story of Jimmu's 神武 conquest of central Japan. This interpretation of historical materials is believed to be consistent with the archeological break in the material remains

of the tombs that occurred during the second half of the fourth century in Japan.

Samguk-sagi 三國史記 contains no mention of Paekche's 百濟 conquest of the Ma-han 馬韓 and the extension of Paekche's territory to the southern shore of Korea in the fourth century. At this point, Ledyard (1975) introduces his imaginative interpretation of Samguk-sagi: "But in King Onjo's 溫祚王 reign [18 B.C. - A.D. 28] . . . we find the chain of notices that covers these events. In 6 A.D., we are told, Mahan 馬韓 protests Paekche's aggressive posture. In 7, omens appear in Paekche that presage the annexation of a neighbor. In 8, the attack against Mahan begins. In 9, the Mahan are annihilated [T]hese notices in the Onjo annals should be transferred cyclically forward 360 years. When this operation is performed, the Mahan conquest turns out to have been accomplished in 366, 367, 368 and 369—exactly the years when the Nihon shoki describes the southward movement of the Paekche armies."¹ That is, according to Ledyard, Samguk-sagi transferred the story backward by six cycles in order to lend antiquity to the date of Paekche's conquest of Mahan.¹

Perhaps simply to maintain the equestrian flavor of Egami, however, Ledyard (1975) contends that the state of Paekche was founded by Puyeo sometime in the twenty-year period between A.D. 352 and 372, and that this "Puyeo state of Paekche" conquered the entire Ma-han area in the south in A.D. 369, reached the sea, boarded boats, and under the leadership of Homuda-wake 譽田別 (an impersonation of the Puyeo warriors) founded Yamato Wa 大和倭 in Japan. As Ledyard summarizes his own theory (KEJ: 3. 230): "The present writer believes Egami's basic concept valid but has rejected the connection with the Chin king and proposed instead that Japan's horse riders invaded subsequent to the Puyeo establishment of Paekche, which he dates in the mid-4th century."²

Ledyard assigns both the foundation of the kingdom of Paekche and Homuda-wake's advance into Japan to the fourth century and holds that both events resulted from the same southern movement of Puyeo refugees. There is, however, no historical evidence to support the notion of the migration of

¹We can find the exactly same interpretation annotated to Samguk-sagi (Lee edition, Volume 2: 34n).

²Ledyard (KEJ: 3.230) continues: "He also believes, developing a proposal of Mizuno, that the dynasty founded by the horse riders came to an end around the beginning of the 6th century, being replaced by a native ruling group. Thus, horse riders, even if they once ruled Japan, would have had no connection with the later imperial family."

warrior equestrian people from Manchuria to south Korea. As Kirkland (1981) contends, the fourth century was a period of unrest in northern China, but there are no records of such unrest actually extending across the Korean peninsula. Koguryeo had provided a protective shield and effectively blocked off the entire northern border. Kirkland states that it seems virtually impossible that Koguryeo, directly in the path of any invaders, could have survived an invasion on the scale suggested by Ledyard. Puyeo was subjugated by the Xian-bei in A.D. 346. Having just suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of a true steppe power, how were the Puyeo suddenly transformed into roaming mounted conquerors? Kirkland (1981) further notes that: "For one thing, Paekche did not appear suddenly in the fourth century. Rather it had been one of the statelets within the Ma-han confederation at least a hundred years before. The Puyeo, therefore, could not possibly have founded Paekche . . . one could argue that it was actually the earlier, native [Paekche] house, rather than Puyeo, who conquered Ma-han in A.D. 366-369." In advocating a direct and fundamentally genetic connection between Paekche and Japan, we differ from Ledyard and hold that Homuda-wake and his band of supporters were people of Paekche.

C. Paekche's Royal Family

In searching for the principal actors in the formation of Yamato Wa and in deducing the special relationship between Korea and Japan during the tomb period, Egami (1964) resorts almost exclusively to Wei-zhi and relies very little on the records of Kojiki and Nihongi, particularly those of the post-三韓 period. Had Egami allotted a proper weight to the post-三韓 records of Kojiki and Nihongi, he could have specified Paekche people rather than, quite anachronistically, the kings of Chin and their followers in the period of the Three Han states 三韓 (represented by Mimaki-iri-biko from Mimana, i.e., Imna) as the principal actors. Unfortunately, Ledyard (1975) also fails to allot a proper weight to the post-三韓 records of Kojiki and Nihongi. Instead, he resorts almost exclusively to Jingū's section of Nihongi. Consequently, the role of Puyeo is exaggerated out of proportion and the actual progress of events in the region is very much ignored. Ledyard seems to have been unnecessarily wedded to Egami's notion of mystic "horseriders," trapped by Egami's design to eliminate the direct influences of Korea. That is, by completely ignoring Korean history, he imagines that the Puyeo, a north Asian, horseriding people, first created the Korean state of Paekche by conquering the indigenous population of that region sometime shortly after the middle of the fourth century. Korean history establishes that the rulers of

Paekche were indeed of Puyeo origin but that they reached the Paekche region in 18 B.C. Absolutely no historical evidence of a Puyeo conquest of Ma-han in the middle of the fourth century exists. Therefore, departing from Ledyard, we contend in the following section that members of the Paekche royal family represented by Homuda-wake and his followers, with the blessing of Paekche's King Keun Ch'ogo [A.D. 346-375], carried out the conquest of central Japan via Kyūshū

D. The Mysterious Horseriding Race

Sansom (1973: 27) states that: "Some writers have assumed that the clans which set forth from Kyūshū to conquer central Japan were of Malay stock; but there is a good deal to be said for the hypothesis that the leaders of the expedition were . . . of Mongolian origin, and had crossed over from Korea by the straits of Tsushima 對馬." In the liberal atmosphere that has prevailed in Japan since the end of the Second World War, Egami (1964) has been able to make many Japanese take seriously his theory that the founders of Yamato Wa entered the country from outside at the end of the fourth century and that they were a horseriding race of northeast Asian provenance who overran and subdued Japan. In an academic article, Egami (1964) states that "the alien people called the gods of heaven were a North East Asian people related to the peoples of Fu-yu [Puyeo] and Kao-chu-li [Koguryeo], as is shown by their social structure and the myths and traditions which they brought with them." And yet, in disseminating information to the general public (cf. 江上, 1986), Egami makes long accounts of the historic nomadic confederations in central Asia -- namely, the Scythians (a nomadic mounted people who lived on the steppes of southern Russia for several hundred years after the 8th century B.C.), the Huns (a nomadic people active in the Mongolian highlands from the third century B.C. to the first century A.D.), the Tungus, the Xian-bei 鮮卑 Tartars, and the Wu-huan 烏桓 Mongolians -- although in the end he settles on the idea that the conquerors were sinified "horseriders" who, like the Puyeo and Koguryeo, were predominantly agricultural and "secondarily nomadic." After all, Amaterasu 天照, the ancestress of the imperial clan, is said to have tended her own rice fields.

Egami's theory of mounted nomadic people can be simply summarized as follows: "From the fourth century into the fifth, continental mounted nomads from the north moved into the south along the Korean Peninsula and crossed the sea to Japan . . . to become the rulers of Japan The imperial clan and other mounted peoples of southern Korea crossed to northern Kyūshū in the first half of the fourth century It took about one century to accomplish

the conquest and to establish the Yamato dynasty. After this, in 663 [the year Paekche fell to Silla-Tang 新羅·唐 allied forces], when the imperial clan had lost supremacy in Korea, it began to insist upon its sovereignty over Japan since ancient times [Kiba Minzoku Kokka 騎馬民族國家, 1967].”

Perhaps quite unconsciously, Egami makes efforts to conceal the direct role of Koreans and present the “horserider theory” to the general public only by alluding to the horseriding nomads of the Eurasian type. Egami goes so far as to accept the idea that the horseriding conquerors were related to the peoples of Puyeo and Koguryeo, but he is nevertheless unwilling to accept any decisive role for the Paekche people in the formation of Yamato Wa (see 江上, 1989: 229-300.)

Apparently the intellectual liberation of Japan has not proceeded far enough to enable Egami to claim that it was the Paekche people who carried out the horserider conquest of Japan. He instead suggests that the mysterious horseriders from North Asia conquered “both” southern Korea and Japan. Egami (1964) states that “immediately prior to their invasion of Japan, they [the horseriding invaders] were based on the Mimana area in south Korea.” He is extremely cautious not to mention specifics when the discussion gets too close to Paekche, or even to Imna [Mimana]. His presentation for the Japanese general public is definitely misleading, and his vagueness seems to be intentional in this case.

If Egami’s goal was indeed to present his archeological findings to the general public as ambiguously as possible, he seems to have succeeded. The following comment of Miller (1980: 170-171) on Egami’s theory perhaps explains why: “No one knew just who these *horseriders* could have been – nor does anyone know today. But the strong implication is that they were some sort of foreign elite – not just anybody, but people of importance, people to be reckoned with. While little else of specific detail is generally attributed to them, it is always made out that they were people of quality, hence worthy to have been involved in Japanese prehistory – above all, worthier of such a role than any motley, non agricultural, preliterate unknowns from the continent or, even worse, from the Korean peninsula. The popular imagination, fed by a never-ending stream of quasi-scholarly speculation, soon concluded that if one had to believe that one’s native land had been invaded and occupied in prehistoric times — much as it was once more being invaded and occupied by a foreign elite at the time these speculations were becoming most rife — then the least one could do was to assume that the invaders had been *our kind of people* — elite, horseriding aristocrats, not such bad types after all. Little of this . . . can possibly be of serious interest to the prehistorian, archeologist, or linguist; but the student of

social pathology will find rich materials for his research in these speculations.”

Egami completely ignores the fact that there is no record of Korea being invaded by any nomadic peoples from northeastern Asia during or before the fourth century. The most noteworthy event was the destruction of the Han 漢 colony of Le-lang 樂浪 by Koguryeo in A.D. 313. Fortunately, in spite of the obfuscations, Egami has left many clues to a clearer understanding of the origins of the Tomb-period Yamato imperial clan, as well as to the origin of the Yayoi-period Kyūshū chieftain, Mimaki Iri-biko.³

Ishida (1974: 85) raises the following question: “According to the Japanese records of the fourth and fifth centuries, a great many immigrants came during the reigns of Ōjin and Nintoku If the Yamato court was established without any relation to Korea, how can these facts be explained?” Aikens and Higuchi (1982: 336) raise a more fundamental question: “It has been suggested that the wave of continental influence that entered Japan during the mid-Kofun times came about . . . as the result of an invasion by equestrian warriors from somewhere in central Asia. These would have been conquerors who, like the army of Genghis Khan in thirteenth-century China, dominated the country for a time, only to be ultimately absorbed into it with a complete loss of their former identity. This thesis . . . depends without warrant on unknown tribesmen emerging from an unknown land for unknown reasons, and then, having conquered Japan (and Korea on the way), melting into the scene so thoroughly that no document or tradition of their war of conquest was left behind. It is, in short, an implausible theory, which only raises more questions than it bids to resolve.” Apparently, Aikens and

³Neither Egami (1964) nor Ledyard (1975) wants to give any kind of honor to Koreans in their stories of the horseriders’ conquest of Japan. The huge scale of the middle-period tombs attests to the huge labor force that must have been required to build them. Ledyard (1975) first asserts that the conquerors could not have pulled labor from the Japanese farms on that scale without experiencing severe food shortages. Then, with a contempt for Koreans, Ledyard suggests that the tombs might have been constructed by “prisoners, captives, dragged behind Puyeo horses from conquests in Manchuria and Korea across the sea to do the work of the new [Yamato] state.” According to Ledyard, the glorified Puyeo people, who have nothing to do with the Koreans, conquered southern Korea first, and then calling themselves Paekche, dragged the Korean prisoners and captives behind their horses to build the enormous middle-period tombs, without ever disrupting the honorable life of the “conquered” Japanese natives. Ledyard gives the status of Mongols to the Puyeo people who, as the conquerors of Korea, “dragooned” Koreans into their service to build and manage the ships for “transmarine migration” into Japan.

Higuchi have overlooked that it was Egami who devised “Central (or North) Asia” as the homeland for the equestrian conquerors in order to avoid the embarrassment of mentioning Paekche. Furthermore, Paekche people in Japan did not lose their former identity completely. They were not unknown tribesmen emerging from an unknown land for unknown reasons. Having conquered Japan, the Paekche people indeed melted into the scene, but not so thoroughly as to leave no documents or traces of their traditions. Egami’s story becomes an implausible theory only because Egami insists on “Central (or North) Asia” in place of “Paekche.”

Miller (1980: 171) states that: “The principal advantage of such a hypothesis [i.e., the hypothesis that the critically formative event in the development of early Japanese culture, state, and civilization was at least one major invasion by horseriding peoples who came over from the Asiatic mainland] is that it does admit the importance of outside influences on early Japan, and does relate developments in Japan to the situation in the rest of early Asia, particularly Korea. Both of these are certainly attempts in the right direction.”

To a linguist such as Miller (1980: 172), the main limitation of the horseriders hypothesis, as far as the origins of the Japanese language are concerned, lies in the fact that it “might” place the formative period for all aspects of Japanese civilization, including language, well into protohistorical times: “The invasions in which the horseriders hypothesis deals are supposed to have taken place at the end of the fourth century of our era. Such invasions may very well have taken place at that time — even major, disruptive ones of the type envisioned by the adherents of this hypothesis. But if they did, they came to a country in which the species *Homo sapiens* had already been domiciled for millennia. The horseriders, if they ever existed, were late, very late intruders upon a cultural and linguistic scene that had already advanced millennia away from its truly formative stage. It seems likely enough that something quite important happened in Japanese life near the end of the fourth century A.D. That something might well have been an invasion from the continent. But if it did take place, it need have left no more impressive traces behind it in the language and culture of the country than did the occupation of Japan by Allied armed forces following the defeat of 1945.” Since I do not place the formative period of the Japanese language at the Kofun period, I have no cause for dispute with Miller’s argument. I only contend that the Paekche people who conquered Japan at the end of the fourth century left much more impressive traces behind than did the U.S. occupation forces and General MacArthur, simply because the pre-Yamato Wa Japan was, in a relative sense, not as advanced as the pre-Second World War Japan.