

## 5.

## FIVE KINGS OF WA:

*Yamato Rulers in Chinese Chronicles*

Some Japanese scholars have attempted to fill the gap that is often referred to as “the mysterious fourth century” by examining the records on five kings of Wa of the fifth century appearing in the *Yi-man chuan* 夷蠻傳 of *Song-shu*.<sup>1</sup> *Song-shu* records that “when Tsan [Zan] 讚 died and his brother, Chên [Zhen] 珍, came to the throne, the latter sent an envoy to the Court with tribute[A.D. 438]. Signing himself 自稱 as King of Wa and Generalissimo Who Maintains Peace in the East [An-dong da-jiang-jun 安東大將軍] Commanding with Battle-Ax All Military Affairs 使持節都督 in the Six Countries of Wa, Paekche, Silla, Imna, Chin-han 秦韓, and Mok-han 慕韓, he presented a memorial requesting that his titles be formally confirmed. An imperial edict confirmed his title of King of Wa and General Who Maintains Peace in the East [An-dong jiang-jun].” (Tsunoda & Goodrich, 1951: 22). King Sai 濟 was also confirmed as King of Wa and An-dong jiang-jun in A.D. 443. In A.D. 451 (ibid.: 22-23), “the additional title was granted of General Who Maintains Peace in the East Commanding with Battle-Ax All Military Affairs in the Six Countries of Wa, Silla, Imna 任那, Kara 加羅, Chin-han, and Mok-han.” In the title, Paekche, with which the Song court was on friendly terms, was replaced by Kala [Kara]. To the Liu Song 劉宋 court, except Paekche, all six countries listed in the title represented, diplomatically, unknown entities. Kō 興, son of King Sai, was also granted the title of King of Wa and An-dong jiang-jun.<sup><1></sup>

Since neither Silla nor the Kaya Federation 加耶 states had established formal diplomatic relations with the Liu Song 劉宋 court, and since most of

<sup>1</sup>Kitamura Bunji (KEJ: 2.287) notes that “[s]ince the early Japanese chronicles offer little solid evidence for the historicity of these 5th century rulers, the Chinese records provide valuable corroboration.”

the town states constituting Ma-han [慕韓=馬韓] and Chin-han were by themselves no longer independent political entities [having mostly been conquered by Paekche and Silla, except those remaining as the member states of the Kaya Federation], the Liu Song rulers apparently did not care much about the title “Commanding All Military Affairs in the Six Countries of Wa, Silla, Imna, Kara, Chin-han and Ma-han” after making sure to delete Paekche from the list of the diplomatically unknown countries the Wa rulers presented.<sup>2</sup>

Song-shu records (ibid.: 23) that “Kō died, and his brother, Bu 武, came to the throne; [Bu sent an envoy], signing himself King of Wa, Generalissimo [Da-jiang-jun] Who Maintains Peace in the East Commanding With Battle-Ax All Military Affairs in the Seven Countries of Wa, Paekche, Silla, Imna, Kala, Chin-han, and Mok-han.” King Bu was at last granted the title of Generalissimo [An-dong *da-jiang-jun*] in A.D. 478.<sup><1></sup> *Jiang-jun* means general and *da* means great.

Nan-Qi-shu records that King Bu was promoted to Zhen-dong *da-jiang-jun* 鎮東大將軍 in A.D. 479, and Liang-shu records that King Bu was further promoted to Zheng-dong *da-jiang-jun* 征東大將軍 in A.D. 502.<sup><2></sup> According to Sakamoto (quoted by Hirano, 1977), the rulers of Yamato were placed below the kings of Koguryeo and Paekche because when King Kō was given the title of *An-dong jiang-jun* in A.D. 462, according to Song-shu, the king of Koguryeo [Changsu: A.D. 413-491] bore the title of *Zheng-dong jiang-jun* and the king of Paekche [Cheonji: A.D. 405-420] *Zhen-dong da-jiang-jun*.<sup><3,7.</sup>

<sup>8. & 3. 7. 9></sup> Hirano (1977) quotes Sakamoto: “That was the order of precedence as seen from China, which is understandable from the viewpoint of the existing international situation.”

According to Hirano (1977), the titles conferred on Paekche generals and vassals carry place names indicating their titular domains after the title *jiang-jun*. Hirano then quotes Sakamoto: “since these titles were for princes and nobles . . . the king of Paekche must have been in the position of an overlord,

<sup>2</sup>As Egami (1964) notes, it may look very strange that the names of six or seven states listed in the self-claimed titles included Chin-han and Ma-han which had preceded, respectively, the states of Silla and Paekche. Perhaps the King of Wa had included the names of six or seven south Korean states in his title merely to boast of the extent of his rule. But Wa Kings could not have included the names of non-existent states. One may then conclude that the remnants of Chin-han or Ma-han existed as other members of the Kaya Federation by the time Wa Kings sent their embassies to China in the fifth century. According to Samguk-sagi (Lee Edition I: 80), Silla established the first contact with the Southern Chinese Dynasties in A. D. 521 by sending an envoy to the Court of Liang along with the Paekche envoy.

the *great king* 大王 (daiō)” According to Nan-Qi-shu, the King of Paekche submitted the list of ranks and titles for his followers in the late fifth century which was formally confirmed by the Qi Court. The list included five titles of *king*, three titles of *vassal* 侯, and seven titles of *Governor* 太守 including *Governor of Choseon*, *Governor of Le-lang* and *Governor of Tai-fang*.<sup><3.7.12></sup> Indeed, Nihongi (NII: 42) uses the expression “*the Great King*” 大王 in addressing the King of Paekche in A.D. 541.<sup><2></sup> There was, however, absolutely no suggestion of the *overlord* status in Chinese chronicles for the five Wa Kings.<sup>3</sup> Hirano (1977) concludes that “Wa was not in a position to lay Paekche under tribute. . . . Conversely, Paekche, supported by Wa in the rear in confronting Koguryeo, was in a humiliating position in which she had to treat the Wa envoys cordially from sheer necessity.” Hirano further notes that “while the king of Paekche uses such phrases as ‘avaricious wolves’ and ‘the villains are gradually becoming rampant’ in his letter about the Koguryeo invaders, Bu calls them ‘unprincipled’ 無道 and ‘a formidable enemy’ 強敵. This shows that both kings understood the situation in the same way.”

The Inariyama 稻荷山 sword inscription mentions a *great king* 獲加多支鹵大王, and according to Murayama and Miller (1979) this represents the same *great king* named in the Funayama tumulus sword inscription discovered in 1873 (熊本縣船山古墳出土太刀).<sup>4</sup> They also note that the Korean scholar, Yi Chinhui 李進熙, has long held that the *great king* in the Funayama inscription refers to a Paekche king, say King Kaero 蓋鹵王 (A.D. 455-475), and not to a Japanese emperor.<sup>5</sup> On the basis of what Murayama and Miller (1979) call “blatant Old Paekche Koreanisms” or what Kim Suk-hyung 金錫亨 (1969: 243-245) calls the “Korean *Idu* system 吏讀式語” found in the inscriptions of the Inariyama sword and the Funayama sword (as well as in the Seven-

<sup>3</sup>Saeki (1977) notes that the *five kings of Wa* persistently requested that the Song emperor bestow the title *da-jiang-jun*. But these requests were not granted, and “all they could obtain was the title *general or jiang-jun* which was bestowed also on those who were apparently local magnates of Wa.”

<sup>4</sup>The Funayama sword inscription states: “(治)天下獲 xxx 鹵大王世奉爲(事)典曹人名无 (無)利工八月中用大鑄釜并四尺 × 刀八十練六十 × 三寸上好 × 刀服此刀者長壽子孫洋洋得三恩也不失其所統作名伊太 × 書者張安也。” See Kim Suk-hyung 金錫亨 (1969: 241-242).

<sup>5</sup>The Inariyama sword inscription states “辛亥年. . . 獲加多支鹵大王寺在斯鬼宮時吾(乎獲居)左治天下令作此百練利刀. . .” which may be read as “In the year of Xin-hai (A.D. 471). . . when the court 寺 of the great king 大王 Wakata 獲加多 Kaero 蓋鹵 was in the Sa-gui Palace. . . .” (See the footnote 10 of the Section 6, Chapter 2.) See also Yi Chinhui (1982).

branched sword), one may, as Kim Suk-hyung suggests, conclude that these swords were made in Paekche and the great kings [支鹵大王] mentioned in their inscriptions represent the Paekche King Kaero [蓋鹵大王].<sup>6</sup> After all, according to Murayama and Miller (1979: 432), the syllable 支 is read either “ki” or “ke.”

What Murayama and Miller (1979) call the *blatant old Paekche Koreanisms* that one can find in the Inariyama inscription can be examined as follows. The inscription begins with the sentence: “Inscribed in the seventh lunar month of a xin-hai year; Wo wakë omi; [his] remote ancestor’s name, Öpö piko 乎獲居臣上祖名意富比訓.” Nihongi’s record on the 62nd year of jingū [A. D. 382] writes Sotsu-hiko 襲津彦 while its quotation of the Paekche Record 百濟記 writes Sachi-hiko 沙至比訓. Nihongi’s record on 7th year of Keitai (NII: 9) writes Oshiyama no Omi 臣押山 while its quotation of the Paekche Original Record 百濟本記 writes Lord Oshiyama 意斯移麻岐彌, apparently the letter 意 being employed for Ö. Furthermore, the employment of the letter “in” or “middle” 中 (*Ch. zhong*) between the lunar-month designation 辛亥年七月 and “inscribed” 記 is a well established usage in Korean epigraphical materials from the middle of the fourth century on. Nihongi’s record (NI: 246) on the 46th year of jingū [A. D. 364] presents the same usage of the letter 中 in a passage of obvious Paekche origin: “In the course of the year Kinoye Ne, three men of Paekche 甲子年七月中 百濟人. . . 三人. . .” On the other hand, the second phonogram 居 (*Ch. ju*) in writing “wakë” 獲居 first appears as writing for the final syllable of miyakë (domain) 彌移居 as preserved in the written prayer 願文 that was sent from Paekche with an image of Buddha sixteen feet high 百濟造丈六佛像 in the 6th year of Kimmei, A. D. 545 (see Nihongi II: 60).

<sup>6</sup>In the *Idu* writing system, Chinese characters at first were simply arranged in Korean word order. Later, however, a more sophisticated system was developed in which Korean nouns were expressed with Chinese characters having the same meaning, while verb stems, inflections, and other grammatical elements, were written by arbitrary use of Chinese characters having the desired pronunciation. See Lee (1984: 57).