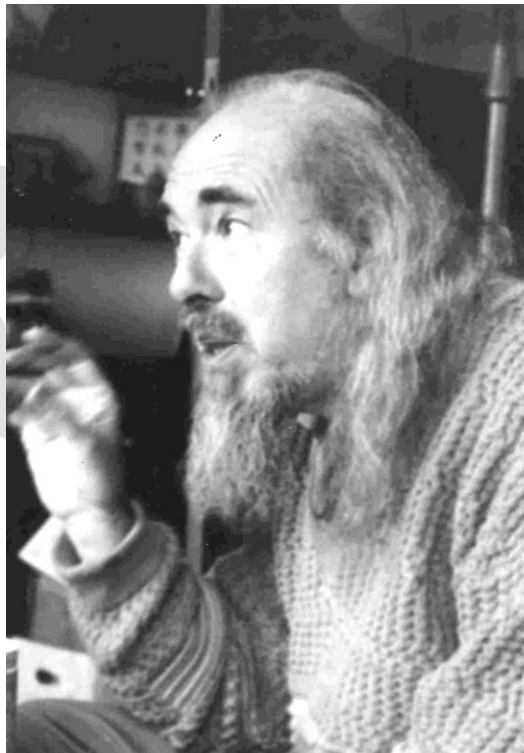


# KENNETH GARDINER

1932 -



by

Pankaj Mohan

# K C I

*The Review of Korean Studies* features interviews with eminent Korean studies scholars worldwide. In this thirteenth interview, we introduce Dr Kenneth Gardiner, formerly senior lecturer in the Department of Asian History, Australian National University, Canberra, now retired. The interview was conducted by Dr Pankaj Mohan, lecturer in Korean studies at the University of Sydney. The Board of The Review of Korean Studies would like to express our deepest gratitude to Dr Ken Gardiner for graciously agreeing to an interview. Further thanks go to Dr. Pankaj Mohan for conducting this interview. - Editor

## Kenneth Gardiner: Indefatigable in Acquiring Knowledge, Tireless in Teaching Others

Ken Gardiner is one of the pioneers of Korean studies in the Western world in many ways. He was the first Western scholar to write his Ph.D. dissertation on Goguryeo at the University of London in 1964, and two years later when he moved to Australia to take up a lectureship in the department of Asian Civilizations of the Australian National University, he pioneered Korean studies in Australia by offering courses in early Korean history. As a scholar and teacher Dr. Gardiner is an ideal illustration of the Confucian dictum “indefatigable in the acquisition of knowledge, tireless in the teaching of others.”

Dr. Gardiner started his life in the East End of London, a working class suburb where, as he often remembers with his characteristic humour, he had a “wonderful view of the gasworks.” Today, in his life of retirement, he lives in the quiet, leafy surroundings of Canberra where he is fortunate to start his day amidst the chorus of birds -- “kookaburra’s laugh, prising apart the sealed lips of the dark” and “magpies warbling up the sun,” to quote from his poem “So Good To Be Here.” Reminiscing about the fascinating journey of his life from a humble background in England to the hallowed halls of the Australian National University, Dr. Gardiner once wrote that already in his childhood he was often immersed in romantic daydreams about far-off lands in the East. To quote from his unpublished memoir of his childhood years: “The wind was already blowing which was to carry me far from my old home, so far that almost all my links with the land in which I grew up are now gone, and I look back upon it with the clarity and distortion of distance. And still the East wind has not yet blown itself out...” He kindly shared with me the memory of his blowing with the “East Wind” in the last five decades.

## **Dr. Ken Gardiner: A Resume**

Kenneth Herbert James Gardiner, born on February 6, 1932, was the son and only child of Herbert Henry Gardiner (1895-1960), a cabinet maker by profession, and Lilian Adelaide Gardiner, née Gray (1902-1969). As a child, Ken Gardiner lived at St. Albans Ave., East Ham, in the east End of London. In 1943, he gained entrance to East Ham Boys' Grammar School, which he attended until 1950. In 1944 the classical scholar J.L. Whiteley became headmaster of the Grammar School, and encouraged the performance of Shakespeare plays and other dramas, as well as the inclusion of more creative work in the school magazine, where Ken published his first poems. Ken Gardiner spent his final years at the Grammar School in the Arts Sixth, studying French, English literature, Latin, and Modern history. In 1950 he secured a place at the School of Asian and African Studies (SOAS), London University, where he majored in pre-modern Indian history, studying under Dr. A.L. Basham, and graduating in 1953. National Service in the Royal Air Force followed from 1953-1955, spent in the main at Bassingbourne, Cambridgeshire, where he served as an operations clerk, although previously he spent three or four months at the Joint Services School for Linguists at Coulsden in Surrey, studying Russian.

In 1955 Ken Gardiner returned to SOAS, where he studied Classical Chinese and eventually carried out research into early Korean history. In 1959 he received a Japanese government scholarship to study at Kyoto University, principally under Prof. Arimitsu Kyoichi, a specialist in Korean archaeology. In 1964 he was finally awarded his doctorate with a thesis entitled "The Origin and Rise of the Korean Kingdoms of Goguryeo from 1<sup>st</sup> Century B.C. to A.D. 313."

Dr. Gardiner returned to Japan in 1964, and for eighteen months he taught English literature at a private women's University (Kyoritsu Joshidai) in Tokyo. In 1966 Dr. Gardiner secured a post at the Australian National University (ANU), Canberra, where he was to teach pre-modern Chinese history, early Korean history, and Classical Chinese, and eventually, to learn the Korean language as well.

Dr. Gardiner took study leave in the northern winter of 1968-9, and returned to London to be with his mother, who died in March 1969. He then returned to Canberra via Prague, Moscow, and Osaka. In the same year Dr. Gardinerhe pub-

lished his first book, *The Early History of Korea*, jointly with Australian National University Press and the University of Hawaii Press.

During the late sixties and early seventies Dr. Gardiner published a number of articles on the early history of Korea and north-eastern China, including “The Hou Han-shu as a Source for the Early Expansion of Goguryeo,” in *Monumenta Serica*, xxviii, 1969; and “Some Problems Concerning the Founding of Baekje,” in the Czech journal *Archiv Orientali* xxxvii, 1969. There followed “The *Samguk Sagi* and Its Sources,” in *Papers in Far Eastern History* iiiII, published by the Department of Far Eastern History, ANU, and two articles on the Kung-sun wWarlords of Liaotung, in volumes v and vi of the same journal. In 1974 Dr. Gardiner published a children’s book, *The Archer and His Son*, with Thomas Nelson, Australia; this book was based upon the Korean legend of the foundation of Goguryeo. Then in March 1977 came T’an Shih-huai and the Hsien-peï Tribes of the Second Century A.D., an article he co-authored with Dr. R.R.C. de Crespigny, in *Papers in Far Eastern History* xv.

In 1982 Dr. Gardiner published “Yarkand in the First century A.D.” in a volume entitled *India: History and Thought -- Essays in Honour of A.L. Basham*, edited by S.N. Mukherjee and published in Calcutta. A further article on Goguryeo, “Aspects of the legend of King Yuri Myong,” appeared in *Austrina*, a volume commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Oriental Society of Australia, published by that society in 1982. Also in 1982, in January and February Dr. Gardiner published in the *Korea Journal* xiii, and in the following number of the same journal an annotated translation of other versions of the legend as they appeared in various Chinese and Sino-Korean texts. At about the same period he published two articles looking at the circumstances in which Vietnam passed out of the Chinese control at the end of the Tang Dynasty, in *Papers in Far Eastern History*, xxiii (March 1981) and xxviii (Sept., 1983).

In 1985 Dr. Gardiner published “From Village Elder to King: the Evolution of Kingship in Ancient and Early Medieval Korea” in *Patterns of Kingship and Authority in Traditional Asia*, a collection of studies, edited by I. W. Mabbet and published in Sydney. In September 1987, came “Korea in Transition: Notes on Three Later Kingdoms (900-936)” in *Papers in Far Eastern History* xxxvi. The following issue of this journal (March 1988) carried Dr. Gardiner’s another article, “Tradition Betrayed? Kim Bu-sik and the Founding of Goguryeo.” During

these years Dr. Gardiner was also working with Dr. Igor de Rachewiltz on an annotated translation of Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*, which has not yet been published, and with Dr. D. D. Leslie on information about the Roman empire which is to be found in Chinese sources of Han and post-Han times. Thanks to an enormous amount of hard work by Dr. Leslie, and contacts provided by Dr. de Rachewiltz, Rome University Press eventually issued published *The Roman Empire in Chinese Sources*, by D. D. Leslie and K.H.J. Gardiner, in 1966. In February of the same year, Dr. Gardiner attended an international conference in Hawaii dealing with the *Samguk sagi*, at the invitation of the University of Hawaii.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to writing scholarly papers and books, Dr. Gardiner continued to pursue his literary interests during this period. He published poems in various local magazines and newspapers, including *Island*, *Muse*, *Blast*, and the *Canberra Times*. His poetic works also appear in several anthologies of Canberra-based poets: *The Poetry of Canberra* (1990); *Looking Out, Looking In* (1994); and *Looking Still* (1998). *Familiar Distances*, a collection of Dr. Gardiner's poems was published by a Canberra-based publisher in 2002. He has also read his poems on radio, in various art galleries, along with such venues in Canberra as the University House, Canberra Theatre, and the café Neruda.

In 1992 Dr. Gardiner took early retirement from his position at ANU.

## Formative Years

Q: How does someone from an undistinguished working class background choose Korea in 1956 as an object of his life-long intellectual quest? Did something happen in your childhood that made you become interested in Asia, if not Korea?

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1. Later, Dr. Gardiner gave his manuscript, entitled 'The Annals of Goguryeo', an annotated translation of the early chapters of the Goguryeo bongi (from King Jumong to King Baekko), to Professor Ned Shultz of the University of Hawaii, who wishes to get the remaining chapters translated under his supervision, and the entire Goguryeo-related text of the *Samguk sagi* published under one cover.

A: My father was a cabinet maker by profession, but my grandfather was in the army and had fought in Afghanistan and Burma, presumably in the brief “Pagoda War” of 1885.

Although it was a relatively obscure campaign, it still lives for many people only in the words of Kipling’s famous song, “The Road to Mandalay.” My grandfather often talked about his years in Asia, and handed down a few words of Hindustani to my father who in turn transmitted them to me.

Q: Interesting. You once told me that you were exposed to the Indian cultural world when you were only seven. How did it happen?

A: In 1939 when I was seven, I was given by one of my aunts a child version of the Indian epics, *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, illustrated and, of course, very greatly condensed. I read them with great interest. I had read *Alice in Wonderland* and Ruskin’s *The King of the Golden River*, but nothing held my attention so much as the first encounter of princes with Drona, the future instructor, or the ill-fated dice game in which Yudhishtira gambled away his entire kingdom. Undoubtedly, these childhood influences continued to work at the back of my mind, and eleven years later, when I got into university, I made what everyone considered the highly eccentric decision to do Indian history.

Q: Did you study Indian history under Professor A. L. Basham who was at SOAS in the 1950’s? But And what made you shift from South Asia to East Asia at the graduate school?

A: Yes, A. L. Basham was my teacher at SOAS. He was a remarkable teacher and an immensely inspiring and helpful person, but what put me off Indian history was the requirement to master Sanskrit which, for complexity, is in a class of its own, way beyond Latin. Later I came into awareness of Chinese through Jerome Ch’en, whom I met in SOAS, and realized that I had basically a visual memory. I found Chinese characters much easier to remember than the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar. As a result, after doing two years of national service in the Air Force, when I went back to S.O.A.S. in 1955, I got a postgraduate scholarship and took classes in Classical Chinese, taught by Angus Graham, as well as a class in Chinese philosophy by D. C. Lau. I was very lucky to have great teachers in my life.

Q: You were lucky indeed to have such great teachers as Prof. Graham and D.C. Lau. How did Korean history come into your life?

A: In 1956 while in the East Asian section of the library of the SOAS, I discovered the *Samguk sagi*, which and I had enough Chinese to begin to read. With the encouragement of Angus Graham, I began to concentrate more on East Asia, especially the history of Korea. I also learnt Japanese.

### **Doctoral Thesis on Goguryeo**

Q: You completed your Ph.D. in 1964 on the topic “The Rise and Development of the Korean Kingdom of Goguryeo from the Earliest Times to A.D. 313” under the supervision of W. G. Beasley and D. C. Twitchett. What major issues did your thesis address?

A: I attempted to bring together what was known or could be surmised concerning the early development of Goguryeo until that kingdom succeeded in overthrowing the last Chinese commanderies in Korea in the early fourth century. I analyzed and compared all available sources, including Goguryeo-related accounts in the Chinese dynastic histories, legendary material retold in Sino-Korean chronicles and epigraphy, and noted some of the possible variations in the interpretations and hypotheses regarding social, economic, and cultural activities on the Korean peninsula.

Q: You acknowledged an immense debt to Michael Loewe in the course of writing your doctoral thesis. I can well imagine the significance of Dr. Loewe’s contribution, as his own doctoral thesis was on the Han dynasty and your work covered Han commanderies in Korea and the nature of relationship between China and the early Korean kingdoms. But who helped you with the Korean archaeological data, crucial to any study on early Goguryeo? Was it in Japan that you received training in Korean archaeology?

A: Yes, in 1959 I gained a scholarship to study in Japan for two years, and I was lucky to work under Prof. Arimitsu of Kyoto University who had done lots of archaeological work in Korea. He also spoke fluent English. Kyoto also had a long tradition of scholarship in early Korean history. While at Kyoto University



I read extensively relevant works by such Japanese scholars on early Korea as Suematsu Yasukazu, Ikeuchi Hiroshi, and Imanishi Ryu. Japanese scholars were very analytical on the sources, that which was useful.

Q: But Some Japanese scholars allowed their allegiance to imperialist Japan to dominate their perspectives on Korea.

A: Well, some scholars have allowed their political views to interfere with their scholarship, but Prof Arimitsu did not see Japan as the center of the universe. He was a critical scholar of the sources, and made me sensitive to the use of archaeology in historical writings.

Q: What are the major sources about the origin and the early history of Goguryeo that you used in your thesis?

A: For the origins of Goguryeo there are three major sources either written in or derived from the Goguryeo kingdom itself; there are also scraps of information in early Chinese dynastic histories. To deal with the Goguryeo sources first: there is the inscription on the Gwanggaeto memorial stele, erected in A.D. 414 in memory of a king who is claimed as the direct descendant of the founder ancestor in the seventeenth generation. Then there is the lengthy account of the foundation legend of Goguryeo included in the dynastic history of the Tuoba Wei written in the mid-sixth century, and repeated in some later dynastic histories. Although this version appears in a Chinese source, it has to be classified with the Gwanggaeto inscription partly because it parallels closely other Goguryeo versions of the foundation legend, and partly because we know that during the Tuoba period there were various cultural connections between Goguryeo and the Wei dynasty court. It is also noticeable that, apart from its long account of the foundation legend, the *Wei shu* is not particularly well-informed about the internal affairs of Goguryeo and, for its description of Goguryeo customs, draws largely upon the third century *Sanguo zhi*. Like the Gwanggaeto inscription, too, it makes all subsequent kings of Goguryeo the descendants of the founder ancestor. Finally and most importantly in the list of Goguryeo materials, we have the first chapters of the account of Goguryeo given in the Sino-Korean chronicle *Samguk sagi* written in 1145.

## Academic Career in Australia

Q: How and why did you move to Australia?

A: After I submitted my Ph.D. thesis at the London University, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, I found that there was not much future for me there in my field, so I went back to Japan to teach English literature at a university in Tokyo. In 1965 I received word from one of my former teachers, Professor A. L. Basham, then at the Australian National University, that a position was available in the department of Asian Civilizations, to lecture in Chinese history. I jumped at it and have been in Canberra ever since.

Q: What courses did you teach at A. N. U.?

A: Initially I taught early Chinese history, but even in my course on early and early medieval China, I referred to Korean history. In those days Australia was coming to terms with the fact that it was not a large landmass somewhere in Europe, and that it was important for Australians to understand their Asian neighbours. A. N. U. emerged as a major centre of research on Asia, and its institute of Advanced Studies issued an important journal, *Papers on Far Eastern History*, in which I published several papers.

As time went on, Korea became an important trading partner of Australia, and a small program in Korean studies was established. I offered a course in early Korean history which covered a range of topics beginning with prehistory and ending with the fall of Silla and the rise of Goryeo in the early tenth century.

Q: Did you attract many research students in your area of expertise?

Most of the students who did their Ph.D. under my supervision were interested in early or early medieval China. Jennifer Holmgren, Aat Vervoorn, Victor Xiong, or and Benjamin Penny wrote excellent theses on some some aspects of Chinese history. But I also had some students who were interested in both China and Korea. Joseph Wong wrote his thesis on the Korean wars and East Asia in the seventh century, and John Jorgensen and yourself were interested in understanding the Buddhist traditions of China and Korea.

Q: Can you say a few words about your experience of mentoring postgradu-

ate students?

A: Mentoring post graduate students can be both refreshing and stimulating, in that such students, often coming from a very different backgrounds to oneself, can have an awareness of aspects of a topic which oneself may not have taken on board.

Q: Your first published research after moving to Australia pertained to the origin of the early Korean states. Can you recollect some of the main points of your research?

A: It is scarcely surprising that the first problem we encounter is that of the actual origin of the Goguryeo state. Origins of pre-modern states rarely occur in the full light of historical documentation, while later historians who bother about such matters often do so because of the political exigencies of their own day, and their statements may mislead more than they enlighten.

Kim Pu-sik himself tells us that historical records in the kingdom of Silla began to be compiled in 545. And even if we leave aside for the moment the question of how far these first records can have been available to Kim Pu-sik writing six hundred years afterwards, it is clear that there can have been no detailed and reliable local annals underlying his account of the first few centuries of Silla history, from 57 B.C. onwards. The detailed month by month chronology which he offers for these ancient times is nothing more nor less than a work of creative imagination, comparable to the reign lengths which his contemporary GeoffryGeoffrey of Monmouth ascribes to Brutus, Lear or other primevalprimeval British kings. Similarly with Silla's neighbor Baekje, Kim Pu-sik indicates that the first records which were kept in Baekje began in the fourth century A.D. If this is so we can have no confidence in the detailed chronology which he offers for Baekje stretching back to the time of its foundation, which he places in 18 B.C.

### **The *Samguk sagi***

Q: In an important article on the *Samguk sagi* you convincingly revealed its major limitations as a reliable source. Would you like to share your thoughts on

this issue?

A: First of all, when we look at genealogy, we realise that it is plainly untrustworthy as a guide to the *Samguk sagi*. It becomes readily apparent when we are told that one king not only reigned for ninety-four years, but then abdicated in favor of his younger brother who, after a reign of twenty years, was succeeded by yet a third brother who went on to reign for fourteen years. Yet a glance at the *Hou Hanshu*, the Chinese dynastic history covering this period and written very much closer to the time, shows that all three of these Goguryeo kings were real people. Their combined reign took in most of the second century, but not merely the reign-lengths but their relative proportions are quite different from those in the *Samguk sagi*, with the last in the series having by far the longest reign of approximately sixty years. Moreover, they appear not as three brothers, but as father, son and grandson respectively. It is clear that the Chinese could and did make genealogical relationships, but in this case the reconstruction offered by the *Hou Hanshu* is much more probable than to prefer, as Kim Bu-sik did, the account given in the Korean sources available to him.

Q: In your article on the *Samguk sagi* you put forward an interesting theory about the foundation dates of the three Kingdoms, Would you please elaborate on it?

A: As is common knowledge, Kim Bu-sik was a descendant of the royal house of Silla, and in 1135-/36 he took the lead in crushing the rebellion of the Buddhist monk Myocheong, who had tried to get the Goryeo dynasty to move back north from Gaesong to the Old Goguryeo capital at Pyeongyang. Indeed, the Goryeo dynasty had once regarded itself as the heir of Goguryeo, and hence its name, and had refortified the old Goguryeo capital on coming to power. But Kim Bu-sik, as a descendant of the Silla ruling house, took the view that the southern state of Silla was the only truly legitimate predecessor of Goryeo, and that the Goryeo founder became the rightful ruler of Korea when he received the abdication of the last Silla king in 935. It was this belief as well as a generally pro-Confucian and anti-Buddhist stance which led Kim to oppose Myocheong's rebellion and later rewrite the history of the period before 935 from a 'southern' viewpoint, reworking the synthesis which earlier Goryeo historians had achieved, so as to stress the role of Silla rather than that of Goguryeo. He did this in several ways. He established or took over from Silla

writers a date for the beginning of Silla—57 B.C.—which would make that kingdom antedate the earliest Chinese reference to Goguryeo, and in so doing he placed the birth of the founder of the Silla dynasty clearly before that of the founder of Goguryeo as the latter appeared in the older *History of the Three Kingdoms*. The date 57 B.C. as the foundation date of Silla also has the merit of being the first year of a sixty year cycle, and exactly twelve such cycles before the final elimination of Silla's older rival in A.D. 663.

Q. You spent a large amount of your time in the late 1980's in producing a richly annotated translation of the early chapters of the *Goguryeo bongi* section of the *Samguk sagi*. Would you kindly tell us something about this project?

A: Originally, I divided my proposed monograph into two parts, roughly along chronological lines. The first part covered what may be termed legendary or heroic Goguryeo in the strict sense of the term; it embraced the reigns of the first five of the *Samguk sagi*'s kings. Although some of these could have been real people, none of them are known from any approximately contemporary source. In the notes I sought, wherever possible, to locate Chinese parallels which may have been present in the writer's mind, and also to contrast Kim Bu-sik's plethora of unfounded detail with the little that the Chinese histories have to tell us about Goguryeo before the middle of the first century A.D.

The second part of the book comprises the remainder of *Samguk sagi*, xv, together with part of xvi, and includes the reigns of three rulers, from Kung (King Taejodae) to Baekko (King Sindae); this takes us from the middle of the first century to the end of the second. The names of the three kings occur in Chinese dynastic histories written within a few centuries of the time at which they are supposed to have lived, and there can be no doubt that they are actual historical figures. Yet hardly anything of their real achievements seems to have been remembered by later generations in Goguryeo, so that there is a sharp contrast between the traditional tales, which fill most of the *Samguk sagi* at this point, and the brief factual notices from the Chinese histories which Kim Bu-sik interpolates into his chronicle. Only with the account of the conflicts that accompanied the accession of King Sansang at the beginning of the third century are Chinese and Korean sources for the first time telling what are clearly variant versions of the same event. Thus this part of the translation takes us from proto-history to history; the problems associated with this are discussed in a separate short introduction to Part Two.

Originally I intended to translate *Samguk sagi* xvii also, containing an account of the reign of Wi-gung (King Dongcheon) and his four successors, but could not do it. In 1992 life changed for me with the birth of my youngest daughter. At the end of the year I took early retirement from the A.N.U., and decided to devote more time to literary pursuits.

Q: .Why did you decide to translate only the early chapters?

A: I decided to translate only up to *Samguk sagi* xvii , because by this point the text has lost its unique character as a repository of independent tradition, and consists mainly of excerpts taken from the Chinese dynastic histories and the *Ziizhitongjian*. Kim Bu-sik knows the personal and posthumous names of later rulers of Goguryeo, but hardly anything else about them; either the *Yuigi sinjib* (the probably source for of earlier chapters), compiled in 600 by the Goguryeo court, ended at this point, or its later chapters were lost.

### ***The Early History of Korea***

Q: Your 1969 book, *The Early History of Korea*, was the first published work in English to address several important issues in the earliest period of Korean history, down up to the late fourth century. What. What was your major objective in writing the book?

A: As I wrote in the introduction of my book, it was based upon studies on various topics in the early history of Korea already carried out by Korean and Japanese scholars, and I wished to make some of this research available to the Western audience. And by focusing on Korea I may have helped to show the rather different shape that northeast Asia assumes when it is no longer viewed from the traditional centres of attention, China and Japan.

Q: Your book also provides a very detailed discussion of Dongshou, which is quite useful in understanding the last phase of the Chinese commanderies on the Korean peninsula in the early fourth century. What is the significance of Dongshou in the history of Goguryeo and in what way was the study of Anak tomb, associated with him, coloured by the nationalist passion of nNorth Korean historians?

A: Dongshou is also known to history from the *Zizhitongjian*. According to the Anak tomb inscription, he was born in Liaodong; according to the *Zizhitongjian*, he served the Murong Xianbei rulers of this part of China, and fled to Goguryeo in 336 along with several other leading Chinese, as a result of civil war in the Murong kingdom. Nothing is known about his activities between that date and his tomb inscription, which is dated by his death on November 24, 357. What is striking, however, is the fact that the inscription nowhere mentions Goguryeo or the king of Goguryeo. Dongshou dates by the reign-title of the Eastern Jin emperor in distant Jiankang, and assumes a whole series of impressive offices, including that of Governor of Lelang and various other commanderies in the East, including Xuantu, which must have been by now occupied by Goguryeo; he is was also the Supreme Commander with Special Authority, the General Pacifying the East, and Commandant-Protector of the Barbarians. It does not look as though Dongshou effectively recognised any authority other than his own, and he had himself painted on the walls of his tomb in semi-regal state. This situation has to be reconciled with what the *Zizhitongjian* tells us about Dongshou's escape to Goguryeo twenty years earlier, and this can perhaps be done by supposing that at one stage he was employed by King Soe of Goguryeo as governor of the old Lelang commandery. Very probably this area still contained a sizable Chinese population, even after the migration of "more than a thousand families" to Liaodong in 313, and as a Liaodong born Chinese, Dongshou may have been a more acceptable governor than a Goguryeo noble. Goguryeo's rule is unlikely to have been well established as far south as Pyeongyang this early, and Dongshou may have taken advantage of his position in between Goguryeo and the expanding power of Baekje to make himself virtually independent, although we certainly need to discount some of the claims of his tomb inscriptions. Within fourteen years of Dongshou's death, Pyeongyang, the capital of old Lelang, was firmly in Goguryeo's hands, and King Soe fell defending the city, apparently, successfully, against Baekje. Thus the administration of Dongshou in Lelang has to be seen as an early stage in the incorporation of this rather Sinicised area into the Goguryeo state.<sup>2</sup>

Q: In his review of your book Professor Kim Won-yong of Seoul National University wrote that your ambivalent attitude towards the two Korean records,

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2. For Aa detailed discussion of this topic see appendix.

*Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, was derived from your “full acceptance of the traditional Japanese view of the two works.” He further emphasized the need for the two works to be “reconsidered from a new point of view without undue prejudice from Japanese days.”

A: Well, I think it is unfortunate that some Korean scholars tend to view critical study of Korean history and Japanese study of Korean history as one and the same thing and as a product of an imperialist mentality. If a foreign scholar fails to accept the authority of the Korean chronicles as—to use Prof. Kim’s word—“absolute,” if he indulges in criticism, then he is obviously accepting “the traditional Japanese view.” which is to say that he is in error. Statements such as these do honour to the spirit of sacred nationalism that beats strongly in the hearts of some Korean historians, but I am tempted to recall the words of Dr. Samuel Johnson on the subject of patriotism, and to reflect that patriotism is all too often the first resort of poor scholarship.

### **Japanese Sources on Korea**

Q: Indeed, your criticism is not confined to Korean sources alone. In your writings you have consistently argued that the early Japanese records on Korea were also tainted with a Japan-centered outlook, and were in many instances, the back-cast projections of the concerns of Yamato administration in the 8th century.

A: Yes, the records on the early Korean states in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* suffer from the drawback of having been written with the purpose of exalting the ruling house of Yamato and legitimising its position. As with Goguryeo on the Korean peninsula, the Yamato ruling house had emerged from a struggle with other competing clans, and history had to be rewritten to stress its pre-eminence. This will have involved lineage falsification, presenting as one unbroken genealogical line what most modern scholars believe to have been three successive dynasties. In addition, legends were included to magnify the prestige of the ruling family. One such was the so-called conquest of Korea attributed to the Empress Jingu. According to this story, her husband, Chuai, was told by a god that he would be granted lands across the sea. When he openly disbelieved in the existence of such countries, he was punished with death. His wife, pregnant at the time, led the armies across the sea under divine guidance, and first having



inserted a stone into her loins in order to prevent the inconvenience of giving birth in the middle of a campaign. After gaining the submission of the king of Silla, Goguryeo, and Baekje, she returned to Japan and removed the stone, giving birth to the future ruler Ojin, later worshipped as their God of War.

This unlikely tale has been rightly dismissed as propaganda by modern Korean historians. However, the dismissal of the Jingu legend need not imply the total rejection of the Japanese histories as sources. The *Nihon shoki* in particular contains variant tales from other, often unnamed, sources about relations between Silla and Wa in this period, some of which show a distinct similarity to passages from the *Samguk sagi*. Presumably, the two have a common origin in some traditions which go back to the Silla times. In addition, on several occasions in this part of the *Nihon shoki*, quotations are made from a lost work called the *Kudara ki*, i.e., *Baekje-gi* in Korean. This work was presumably the ultimate source of much of the information concerning Baekje in the late fourth century, and seems to have taken the form of a chronicle.

It needs to be said, however, that even if the statements of the *Nihon shoki* at this point are based upon certain Baekje Chronicles which survived into the eighth century, presumably being brought to Japan with some of the numerous Baekje exiles, this does not mean that the Japanese history presented the Baekje records unchanged. For instance, in a passage in the *Nihon shoki*, an envoy of Baekje is described as visiting the ruler of Taksun, in the upper valley of the Nakdong river, and inquires about “Nihon,” or Japan. The ruler of Taksun replies, “I have always heard that there is an honourable country in the East, but I have had no communication with it, and I do not know the way.” The term “Nihon” was not in use in the fourth century or even the fifth century, and such terms as “honourable country” suggest strongly that the text has been doctored.

## Other Matters

Q: While most scholars believe that Goguryeo was an independent kingdom, and its tributary relation with China represented merely a form of diplomacy, several Chinese scholars of history have recently sought to appropriate Goguryeo as a Chinese state. They cite the evidence of tribute and investiture to argue that Goguryeo maintained a subordinate relationship with the Chinese dynasties (on the central plain) and that Goguryeo rulers were merely provincial officials under the rule of the Chinese state.

A: In order to understand the nature of Goguryeo's relationship with China, it is important to refer to an important event that occurred in 12 A. D. In this year, when the Goguryeo tribes rebelled against Wang Mang, their "Marquis," a chieftain called Ch'u, was summoned to the headquarters of a Chinese general and executed. Needless to say, this action did not succeed in taming the rebellion, and from this time onward the Goguryeo tribes, although in Chinese eyes of course they remained dependent of the Han Empire, went very much their own way. Thus, in retrospect, the events of 12 A.D. can be seen as severing the ties of client relationship which bound Goguryeo to China throughout the former Han period; for the greater part of the later Han dynasty, Goguryeo was very far from being a dependable ally, which it had been under the former Han, and indeed it gradually emerged as the principal opponent of Chinese domination in the north-east. It is also remarkable that Goguryeo always took advantage of the periods when China was weak. When China was strong and unified, it kept a low profile. In this way, the rulers of Goguryeo were not at all different from other rulers on the Chinese border. Indeed, Chinese control over northern Vietnam was tighter than over northern Korea. When Chinese commanderies in Korea were overrun by the indigenous Korean states, Vietnam was still part of the Chinese empire and remained so until the end of the Tang dynasty in the ninth century.

Goguryeo rulers received investiture from the Chinese court in order to heighten their authority at home. Kingship in early Goguryeo was transferred from one tribe to another, and if a ruler belonging to a particular tribe (e. g. Gyeru bu) received investiture, it helped that tribe to enhance its authority.

Q: And can you share your teaching philosophy with us?

A: Look at the original sources, and just judge the value of modern historical works by their awareness and critical analysis of these primary sources, and also by their awareness of modern archaeological research.

Q: Do you have any message to a the younger generation of scholars and students in the field of early Korea?

A: Ultimately the value of modern scholarship on early Korea springs from a critical analysis of early texts and an awareness of recent archaeological research and how this may have an impact on our understanding of the early texts.

## Appendix

### Notes on the Dongshou Inscription

The enormous Anak tomb at Hwanghaedo excavated between 1949 and 1957 provides very useful historical material to understand the state of affairs on the Korean peninsula in the fourth century. The tomb consists of a mound some seven metres high and approximately 22 metres long, under which are five or six connected stone chambers arranged roughly in the shape of a cross. Although this tomb had evidently been plundered in antiquity, a series of frescoes were found on the walls, as well as an inscription giving the date 357. The frescoes give us a unique glimpse into the life of the time. On the walls of the easternmost chamber are a number of scenes of everyday life; a woman is drawing from a well, while others are preparing food in a kitchen while a crow sits on the roof. Nearby, meat is hanging in a store on hooks, mostly consisting of whole animals, including a pig and a dog, obviously the subject of interest to two very lively dogs scavenging in the courtyards. Horses can be seen in a stable, cattle in a byre, and various carts and other equipments are visible. The largest fresco in the tomb, which runs along the corridor connecting the central chamber with the back or northernmost chamber, appears to show the owner of the tomb being drawn in procession in an ox-cart, accompanied by mounted attendants, foot-soldiers with spears and shields, archers, cavalrymen riding armoured horses, and various musicians. A full-face portrait of the deceased, accompanied by four labelled officials, occupies the centre of the back wall in the western chamber, and on an adjacent wall is a portrait in similar style of a lady who must surely be his principal wife.

There is no inscription in the western chamber where the main portraits are found, other than the brief indications of offices held by the attendants of the deceased. An inscription of sixty characters, painted in black ink, appears over the head of one of a pair of guardian figures on flanking walls either side of the entrance to the western chamber, looking inwards towards the central chamber. The text may be translated as follows:

On the twenty-sixth day, Guichou, of the tenth month beginning on the day Mouzi, in the thirteenth year of Yonghe's reign (24<sup>th</sup> November 357), the Supreme Commander with Special Authority, the General Pacifying the East, Commandant-Protector of the Barbarians, Governor of Lelang,

and of commanderies of Changli, Xuantu and Daifang, the Duxiang Marquis Dongshou, whose courtesy name was—An, died in office at the age of sixty-nine. He was from the Jingshang hamlet, in the district which contained the administrative headquarters of Pingguo prefecture in the commandery of Liaodong in Yu district.

The fact that the commanderies of Changli, Xuantu, and Daifang are listed separately from Lelang might suggest that they were not strictly under TungDongshou's control; indeed, we know that at this time Changli was part of the home territories of the Murong Yan. Nevertheless, in view of the impressive titles claimed by Dongshou, or claimed for him in this inscription, it is clear that he was a very important man, indeed. If the inscription refers to the standing figure of the guardian over whom it is painted, then the figure on the back wall of the wWestern chamber can only have been that of Dongshou's superior, . Wwho must therefore have been even more important. *Zizhitongjian* informs us that Dongshou fled to the king of Goguryeo in 336, after which he disappears from Chinese historical records. Because of this, North Korean archaeologists have claimed that the superior of Dongshou would have been the kKing of Goguryeo and that consequently, the picture on the back of the wWestern chamber is that of the king of Goguryeo, and that the tomb is consequently his tomb.

Attractive as this theory might be, it fails to take account of several very serious obstacles. Why is there no other inscription in the tomb giving the titles of the king of Goguryeo? Why is there no inscription at all next to the main portrait supposed to be that of the king of Goguryeo in the wWestern chamber? Why is there no inscription over the head of the other guardian figure that pairs the one with the Dongshou text? Why does the Dongshou inscription not merely omit all mention of the king of Goguryeo, but even go out of its way to create the impression that Dongshou was a subordinate of the powerless Eastern Jin dynasty ruling at Jiankang (modern Nanjing), since Dongshou's titles such as "General Pacifying the East, and" Commandant-Protector of the Barbarians" were such as were regularly conferred upon Chinese officials serving in the northeast of the empire. It seems strange that such titles would be written up in a tomb belonging to a king of Goguryeo, while the king himself was nowhere named or mentioned in the tomb. Finally, which king of Goguryeo could have owned the tomb? According to the *Samguk sagi*, Eollbul (King Mucheon) died in 331, and Chinese sources agree to this extent, that by 339, only three years after Dongshou had fled to Goguryeo, King So was certainly already on the

Goguryeo throne. It would seem strange for Dongshou to have his portrait in the tomb, of a king whom he can only have served for three years at the most, when we know that he remained in the east for another eighteen years. On the other hand, King So is known to have been killed in 371, resisting a Baekje attack upon Pyeongyang. At that time the Anak area would have been dangerously exposed to Baekje raids and hardly considered a safe area for the burial of a king; moreover, from what is known of the Goguryeo kings suggests that all the kings before 412 were buried outside the capital at Hwando in the north.

Thus, there seem to be insuperable difficulties in taking the Anak No. 3 tomb to be as that of a Goguryeo king. The only alternative, other than positing the existence of a totally unknown superior for to Dongshou, is to take the tomb as that of Dongshou himself., i. e. to assume that the inscription, although placed over the head of one of the guardian figures, actually refers to the figure painted on the back of the western chamber, who would be seen framed by the two guardian figures when viewed from the central chamber. If this is the case, and the inscription refers to the portrait seen behind the two guardians, it would explain why there is no inscription over the head of the right hand guardian.

We can probably assume that the tomb will have been constructed during Dongshou's lifetime—no other tomb at Pyeongyang has produced a brick manufactured at the command of Dongli, Governor-Designate of Liaodong, Han and Xuantu (Hyeondo), and presumably a relative of Dongshou's. Nevertheless, there are signs that Dongshou's funeral arrangements were carried out in some haste. Painted inscriptions are rare in Chinese tombs of the Han and post-Han eras, the usual practice being to erect a stele at the tomb site with a text actually inscribed on the stone. Moreover, Dongshou's inscription was hastily executed as is seen from the fact that in the second line, a character has been wrongly written and then altered, traces of the original being still, visible. A hasty burial might also explain the unusual placing of the inscription in the tomb.

Finally, it should be noted that the attendants of the main figure on the back of the western chamber are labelled "Junior Scribe" and "a Member of the Secretariat Officials," hardly the kind of official who would be portrayed flanking a powerful king in his tomb, especially if that king had a high ranking general for his tomb guardian.

To my mind these arguments are conclusive, and combine to make it virtually certain that this very impressive monument was constructed for Dongshou. Taken together with the Dongli brick, this suggests that Dongshou wielded very real power in this part of Korea for some years before his death in 357. The fact that

his inscription makes no mention of Goguryeo, but uses the official and reign titles of the powerless Eastern Jin dynasty is also suggestive. Presumably, claiming to be a Jin loyalist enabled Dongshou to legitimise his ambiguous position in Korea, in much the same way as the Zhang family who ruled in Gansu, and who received official titles from the Eastern Jin for several generations, although they were completely cut off from any direct influence from Jiankang, and contact between the two was maintained with only with the greatest difficulty.

Since we know from the *Zizhitongjian* that Dongshou fled to Goguryeo in early 336, it would appear that at some time in subsequent years he must have risen to a position of trust at in the Goguryeo court. This in itself is hardly surprising. As already noticed, a number of Chinese scholar-gentry had already fled to Goguryeo, and it would appear that, by patronising these men with their administrative expertise, the Goguryeo kings were increasingly able increasingly to free themselves from constraints upon their power from the local tribal nobles. Presumably, Dongshou was at some time despatched into the Lelang (Nangnang) area, still dominated by the descendants of the Chinese settlers, in order to organise Lelang as a dependency of Goguryeo. After the sack of Hwando in 343, Dongshou will most likely have taken advantage of Goguryeo's troubles to win the support of the Chinese colonists and to set himself up as an effectively independent warlord. Dongshou was 55 when Hwando fell, with a long career of opportunism and intrigue behind him. But, if this interpretation is correct, he was able to keep control of Lelang until his death fourteen years later. His regime represents the last stage in the existence of Lelang commandery, probably maintained by singularly motley forces. Soon after Dongshou's death, the dependent existence of Lelang came to an end, and by the late 360's the area had been firmly incorporated into Goguryeo.