

Eastern Barbarian Consciousness in *Research on Manchu Origins*

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The notion that the progenitor of the Jurchen Jin dynasty was a Korean and that Korea was the ancestral land of the Manchu was widespread in East Asia in the twelfth century and continued for hundreds of years until the compilation of *Research on Manchu Origins* in the eighteenth century. Related records can be found in Chinese, Jurchen, and Korean records of the time such as *Songmojiwen* and *Goryeosa*. *Dongyi* (東夷) refers to the Sinocentric world view where the Chinese themselves occupy the center of the universe, while the people on its four fringes were considered barbarians. *Dongyi* (東夷) here refers to eastern barbarians, which includes Koreans, Japanese, and the Manchu. In this paper, *Dongyi* consciousness refers to the Qing elite's view of the ancient Korean kingdoms of Baekje and Silla. It appears that Hambo (函普), a man from Silla, migrated to Jurchen, married a Jurchen woman, and settled there. Starting from the time of his fourth generation descendant Seok Ro, his tribe began to gain power, and his seventh generation descendant Aguda founded the Jin dynasty. A fact that shows the Manchu's affinity toward Koreans is that kingdoms normally regarded as being Korean such as Buyeo, Baekje, and Silla are included in a book on Manchu origins, *Research on Manchu Origins*. The compiler's motive in including Baekje and Silla seems to have been to emphasize the advanced civilizations of Baekje and Silla as their ancestors and thereby placing themselves on an equal footing with the Han.

Keywords: Hambo, Jurchen Jin dynasty, *Songmojiwen*, *Goryeosa*, *Research on Manchu Origins*

Research on Manchu Origins (hereafter, *Research*) was published in the Qing dynasty during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736-1795) and was an official history of the dynasty. The book makes clear the fact that the Manchu ancestors were descended from the kingdoms of Baekje and Silla. In this paper, I

will focus on the passage “the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was Korean” (Kim 1959:87-90) and show that until the eighteenth century when *Research* was published, the Manchu thought of Koreans as being their direct ancestors.

Related passages in *Research* include: (1) The progenitor of the Jin dynasty was named Hambo. He came from Goryeo (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 7, p. 179). (2) According to *Tonggao* and *Dajinguozhi*, they all say that [the progenitor of the Jin dynasty] came from Silla. His surname was Wanan. The old territories of Silla and Goryeo were intermingled. The Liao and Jin histories often do not differentiate between the two. According to historical records the Silla king was surnamed Kim (金). There is no doubt that after tens of generations the progenitor of the Jin (金) dynasty came from Silla (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 7, p. 179). (3) The progenitor of the Jin dynasty was originally from Silla (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 7, p. 181). (4) The ruler [of the Jurchen] was originally from Silla. He was named Wanan. The Jurchen upheld him as their ruler (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 7, p. 183). (5) It seems the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was originally from Silla. His surname was Wanan. His tribe was also called Wanan. Since the surname of the Silla royal family was Kim (金), the remote ancestors of the Jin (金) dynasty were from Silla (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 7, p. 186). (6) The progenitor of the Jin dynasty came from Silla. He lived with the Wanan tribe and took Wanan as his surname (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 7, p. 193).

Passages such as these which state the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was Korean also appear in *Jinshi* (金史), *Danjinguozhi* (大金國志), *Songmojiwen* (松漠記聞), *Shenluji* (神麓記), *Goryeosa* (高麗史), *Goryeosa jeolyo* (高麗史節要), *Ji bong-yuseol* (芝峯類說), and *Liaoshishiyi* (遼史拾遺) (Kim 1959:86-9). *Research* also states that Gyerim (鷄林), another name for Silla, is the same as Jilin (吉林).

Supporting evidence that the Manchu regarded Koreans as their ancestors is the fact that Korean states such as Baekje and Silla are included in *Research*, a book dealing with the ancestors of the Manchu. The motive for including Baekje and Silla in *Research* seems to be to emphasize the ancient origins of the Manchu, thereby allowing the Manchu to place themselves on equal footing with the Han. Thus, until the eighteenth century when *Research* was published, the Manchu thought of Baekje and Silla as being their ancestors.

Prior Research

Study of *Research* is lacking not only in Korea but in other countries as well.

Until now, there have only been several short papers on the subject, and no book-length study of the manuscript. The first person to take note of *Research* in the modern era and claim that the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was Bak Eun Sik during the Japanese colonial period. In his article “Mongbae geumtaejo,” he claims that the Manchu and Koreans were of the same origin and tried to use *Research* to prove this (Bak 2002:171-75).

There continues to be controversy between Korean and Japanese scholars on the question of the progenitor of the Jin dynasty. Most Japanese scholars doubt the authenticity of the story, while Korean scholars (e.g., Kim Sang Gi and Yi Dong-bok) support it. In 1959, Kim Sang Gi in his paper “Geumui sijoe daehayeo” attempted to prove that the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was Korean (Kim 1959:98-101). Unlike the Japanese scholar Ikeuchi, he tried to prove that the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was not an imaginary figure, and that it was highly possible that the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was an actual historical figure. Yi Dong-bok, likewise, supported this viewpoint and doubted the possibility that the legend was a fabrication (Yi 1981:279-80).

In 1987, a western scholar, Pamela Kyle Crossley, in her “Manzhou yuanliu kao and the Formalization of the Manchu Heritage,” dealt with *Research* but did not note any close relations between the Manchu and Koreans (Crossley 1987). Recently, Fang Jing Yi claimed that the idea that the Manchu and Koreans are related, or eastern barbarian (東夷, *dongyi*) consciousness, was not a phenomena that suddenly appeared during the eighteenth century Qing dynasty when *Research* was written, but had a long history.¹

In this paper, the author will try to prove that eastern barbarian consciousness, or the belief that the Manchu and Koreans are related, had a long history and that it originated during the twelfth-century Jin dynasty and continued for hundreds of years until the compilation of *Research* in the eighteenth century. Previously, only a small portion of *Research* had been translated into Korean in a piecemeal fashion, but the full text of *Research on Manchu Origins* was recently translated into Korean, although not by a professional historian (Jang 2008).

1. Some Korean scholars who have researched *Research* include Kim 1988, Yi 1976, and Yi 1986.

Compilation and Contents

Research on Manchu Origins is an official history of the Qing dynasty published in the 42nd year (1777) of Emperor Qianlong's reign. The overall supervisor of the project was Agui (阿桂), a leading military commander of the time. Agui appears to have begun his career as a government official due to the influence of his father, Akedun (阿克敦), a high ranking government official and noted philosopher and scholar. In contrast to his father who distinguished himself academically, Agui appears to have been chiefly a military figure who won Emperor Qianlong's favor due to his suppression of rebellions in the southwest (Zhang 2005:671-72).

The most important motivation for the compilation of *Research* was to check the Manchu's assimilation into the Han population, and to allow the Manchu to have pride in their own ancestry. The majority of the people who participated in the compilation were the same people who participated in the compilation of *Sikaoquanshu* (四庫全書), which shows how much importance Emperor Qianlong placed on the project. The foremost purpose of *Research* was to check the Manchu's absorption into the surrounding Chinese cultural settings (Fang 2005:105-9).

Research is composed of four parts: tribes, territory, mountains and streams, and national customs. The tribal section is composed of Suksin, Buyeo, Eumnu, Samhan, Mulgil, Baekje, Silla, Malgal, Wanan, and Geonju. The fact that Buyeo, Samhan, Baekje, and Silla, normally considered Korean states, are included in this section shows that the Manchu recognized them as being related to themselves and were included to show that the Manchu had great ancestors. This allowed the Manchu to put themselves on equal footing with ethnic Han; in effect, allowing the Manchu to claim that they had a civilization as old and as great as that of the Han.

The territory section mainly deals with the geography of the above mentioned tribes. The mountains and streams section deals with the important mountains and streams of this area. The national customs section broadly deals with archery and horsemanship, clothing, religion and politics, sacrificial rites, sacrifices to heaven, worship of gods, miscellaneous rites, government organization, language, and local products.

Idea that Korea was the Jurchen Ancestral Land

The idea that the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was a Korean was already

widespread in Song, the Jin dynasty, and Goryeo in the twelfth century. As mentioned previously, the name of the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was Hambo. He came from Silla and settled with the Wanan Jurchen, marrying a Jurchen woman. Starting from the time of his fourth generation descendant Seok Ro (石魯), his clan began to gain power, and a few generations afterwards, his descendant, Aguda (阿骨打), founded the Jin (金) dynasty (Kim 1959:90-1).

This seems to be a reflection of frequent contact between Korea and Manchuria during the Joseon period (1392-1910). During the Joseon period, in the Liaodong area, there was frequent overland trade between the two peoples. In addition to official government trade conducted through tribute missions, there was privately based trade conducted on the border. Privately based trade appeared because government trade alone could not satisfy the needs of the Jurchen people. As private trade with Korea became inextricably linked with the Jurchen's livelihood and production, the private trade between the two prospered.

In fact, one reason the Jurchen were able to rise as quickly as they did was because of their absorption of Korean production methods. Previously, the Jurchen people knew only hunting and were totally ignorant of agriculture. In later times, however, the Jurchen imported plow-oxen and iron agricultural implements mainly from Joseon and possibly from other areas and were able to quickly transform into an agricultural society and develop their social economy. Other Jurchen tribes followed suit and also adopted agriculture as their occupation, and procured large numbers of plow-oxen, horses, and iron agricultural tools.

The phenomenon of mixed residence between Joseon and Jurchen was common in both Joseon as well as in Jurchen. This created conditions which furthered cultural exchange and integration between the two (Kim 1999:704-8). Prolonged mixed residence resulted in intermarriage, easier communication, and familiarity with the other's customs. There were many children of mixed Joseon-Jurchen background. The children resulting from such intermarriages were referred to as 'cultured descendants' (*hyanghwajason* or *jajihyanghwa*). The Joseon government did not oppose or ban such intermarriages, but rather, actively gave them official approval.

In the late Ming period, there was a large shift of population from Korea to Jurchen. Hong Taiji, through two invasions of Korea, kidnapped large numbers of Koreans to Jurchen. These Koreans, with their knowledge of agricultural techniques and metal working seem to have played an important role in the rise of the Qing dynasty (Kim 1999:709-11).

In *Goryeosa*, there are two versions of the story of Hambo. One says that the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was originally a Korean monk named Geum-jun from Pyeongju and another says that he was a Korean monk named Geuk-su, son of Gim Haeng, also from Pyeongju. Whichever the case, it seems possible that a Korean went to Jurchen and became the progenitor of the Jin dynasty.

An important document dating from this period which states that the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was a Korean is *Songmojiwen* (松漠記聞). It was written by Honghao (洪皓), who was sent to the Jin dynasty to negotiate the return of the two captured emperors Huizong (徽宗) and Qinzong (欽宗). Detained for thirteen years, he wrote down what he had seen and heard there. Another Chinese document of this time which states that the progenitor of the Jin dynasty was a Korean is *Shenluji* (神麓記), written by Miaoyao (苗耀).

In a document sent to Goryeo by the Jurchen requesting the return of territory seized by Yun Gwan (尹瓘), a famous Goryeo general, it says, “Our past leader Yingge (盈歌) said that our ancestors came from Korea and therefore we must be loyal to Korea down through the generations,” and our current leader Wuyashu (烏雅束) also states that Korea is our ancestral land (Kim 1959:96). In a document sent to Goryeo by Aguda, the founder of the Jin dynasty, it also calls Goryeo the ancestral land. Also, in a document sent from Goryeo to the Jurchen at this time there is a passage which says, “to say nothing of the fact that they [Jurchen] originated from us [Goryeo]” (Kim 1959:98).

In the actual diplomatic relations between Jurchen and Goryeo at this time, the Jurchen consistently took a peaceful approach toward Goryeo. For example, when Goryeo tried to seize Naewon (來遠) and Poju (抱州) territories, Aguda merely ordered a reinforcement of troops and a careful watch of the borders. After receiving information that Goryeo was reinforcing its northern frontiers, Aguda ordered that no invasive measures be taken, but only a careful watch of the borders be kept.

It seems the next Jin ruler also continued these peaceful measures toward Goryeo. He said to his subordinates, “Whosoever dares to invade Goryeo, even if he wins, will be punished” (Kim 1959:100). There must be reasons why the Jin dynasty took such peaceful measures toward Goryeo, but one reason seems to be because the Jurchen regarded Goryeo as their ancestral land (Kim 1999:99-102).

Research Appraisal of Silla and Baekje Civilization

At the time of the compilation of *Research*, the Jurchen recognized Silla and

Baekje as being their ancestors and therefore included Silla and Baekje in the tribal chapters of the book. By emphasizing Silla's and also Baekje's advanced civilizations, the compilers of *Research* were in effect stating that they had ancestors on an equal footing with the Han. The compilers hoped that through this the Manchu would take pride in their own ancestry.

The majority of the content about Silla and Baekje in *Research* is about tribute and investiture. Cultural exchanges between Silla, Baekje, and China from the Wei-jin to the Tang period were very frequent. Other people mentioned in *Research*, such as Eumnu, Mulgil, Wanan, and Geonju, do not seem to have had such an intimate relationship with China during this time as did Silla and Baekje.

In the Wanan chapter of the tribal section it says, "The progenitor of the Jin dynasty originally came from Silla. He was named Wanan and his tribe was also called Wanan. The surname of the Silla royal family was Kim (金). Therefore the remote ancestors of the Jin (金) dynasty came from Silla" (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 7, p. 186). This clearly shows that the Qing elite, up until the time of the compilation of *Research*, considered Koreans as being their distant relatives. Whether this is true or not, the fact that until the eighteenth century the Manchu regarded Koreans as being their ancestors is interesting.

Another commentary says, "The culture of Baekje and Silla is highly advanced. They frequently interact with Sui and Tang and are also good at composition" (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 2, p. 594). Another says, "The level of civilization of Baekje is equal to that of Silla. They value horsemanship and archery and value books greatly" (*Research*, vol. 7, ch. 3, p. 108). These statements were intended to show that the Manchu had ancestors as old and as great as the Han, allowing the Manchu to take pride in their own ancestry. Other commentaries about other tribes in *Research* rarely show such praise.

In contrast to such positive appraisals on Silla and Baekje, commentaries on Balhae merely say, "The bravery of the Balhae people is such that two Balhae people can face one tiger" (*Research*, vol. 6, ch. 6, p. 177).

Contents of the Silla and Baekje Chapters

The Silla chapter in *Research* is composed of the Silla origins, tribute and investiture missions with China from the Wei-jin to the Tang period, Silla princes held hostage in Tang, succession to the throne in Silla, the formation of the Silla-Tang alliance, relations with Goguryeo and Baekje, and material on

Contents	Number of Chinese Characters
Silla origins	829 characters
Location	957 characters
Tribute and Investiture	4,928 characters
Geography	17 characters
Royal Genealogy	21 characters
Customs	23 characters
Culture	24 characters
Jang Bogo	255 characters
War	772 characters

Exchanges between Silla and the Chinese Dynasties

Dynasty	Frequency
Early Chin Fu Chien (前秦 苻堅)	3
Southern Dynasties Liang (南朝 陳)	1
Southern Dynasties Jin (南朝 陳)	4
Northern Dynasties North Qi (北朝 北齊)	9
Sui ((隋)	2 or 3
Tang Gao Tzu (唐 高祖)	3
Tang Taizong (唐 太宗)	5
Tang Gaozong (唐 高宗)	11
Tang Zhongzong (唐 中宗)	3
Tang Wu Ze Tian (唐 武則天)	3
Tang Xianzong (唐 玄宗)	18
Tang Daizong (唐 代宗)	4 or 5
Tang Dezong (唐 德宗)	4
Tang Shunzong (唐 順宗)	1
Tang Xianzong (唐 憲宗)	9 or 10
Tang Muzong, Jingzong (唐 穆宗, 敬宗)	6
Tang Wuzong (唐 武宗)	1
Tang Wenzong (唐 文宗)	5
Five Dynasties (五代十國)	9 or 10

Jang Bogo. But in terms of quantity, tribute and investiture missions compose the overwhelming majority, consisting of over eight-tenths. Most Silla-related contents are found in the tribal chapter (部族篇), but some content can also be found in other parts of the book.

The contents of the Baekje chapter in *Research* are very similar to that of the Silla chapter in that tribute and investiture missions with China from the Wei-jin to the Tang period comprise the overwhelming majority. The Silla chapter contains a total of 7,838 Chinese characters.

As mentioned above, the composition of the Baekje chapter is similar to the Silla chapter. Tribute and investiture missions comprise the majority of the content, followed by content related to war. When Tang sent envoys to Silla, the envoys sent were always their top scholars and elite officials. In contrast, when Tang sent envoys to Balhae, only nameless eunuchs were sent. This means that Tang clearly differentiated between Silla and Balhae (Gwon 2005:23-6).

Manchu's Sense of Identity

It is a common misconception that a century or so after the Qing (Manchu) conquest of China in the early seventeenth century the Manchu became totally assimilated into the Han population, completely losing their sense of identity. The Manchu's thinking about their own distinct ancestry and their self-perception endured longer than most people assume. Although the use of the Manchu language and the Manchu's sense of identity has declined, nevertheless, the Manchu language was used in official documents until the twentieth century and the Manchu's sense of identity likewise seems to have persisted into the twentieth century.

From the beginning of the Manchu conquest of the Chinese mainland in the early seventeenth century, Manchu bannermen living in the Chinese provinces lived separate lives from the surrounding Han population in segregated, walled towns called Manchu cities. The purpose was to prevent the acculturation of the Manchu into Han surroundings.

The creation of the Jurchen alphabet by Nurhaci (r. 1616-1626) was an important factor in the creation of Manchu identity, and was directly linked to a sense of Manchu national identity and ethnicity. The motive for the creation of the Jurchen alphabet was to break away from the influences of the Mongol culture (Seo 1979:18-9).

From the beginning of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the Manchu harbored a mistrust of the Han population and tended to discriminate against them. Legally, the Han population had many disadvantages as the Manchu held privileges such as legal immunity. Manchu would be punished considerably less

for the same crime than a Han and in many cases the crimes of a Manchu would go unpunished altogether.

The customs of the Manchu were distinct from the surrounding population in terms of religion, naming practices, and the position of women. Such distinctions persisted into the twentieth century. In terms of religion, the Manchu practice Shamanism. The first thing the Qing emperor did on New Year's Day was to perform sacrifices at the shaman shrine. Such practices aroused the curiosity of the Han who were never allowed to view such rituals.

Manchu names transcribed into Chinese characters seemed to have no meaning to the conquered Han, but had meaning in the Manchu language. Manchu naming practices differed radically from the Han. Manchu children were named for their appearance, their personal characteristics, for animals, plants, and objects. Names such as Kirsā (steppe fox), Unahan (colt), and Jumara (squirrel) were not uncommon. Other Manchu naming practices included numeral names and naming individual dogs, horses, and even elephants, which the subjugated Han population did not do (Elliott 2001:241-43).

Manchu women did not have bound feet, as most ethnic Han women did. Manchu women rode horses alongside men and even participated in hunts. Manchu women had more freedom, and as widows, they were allowed to remarry, unlike the majority of Han women. Manchu women were entitled to inherit property and enjoyed higher social standing and educational opportunities.

The Manchu woman's appearance was also different. Her clothing with narrower sleeves and her hair set her apart. The hair was drawn back from the forehead and tied behind in a knot. Distinctive jewelry such as three earrings in one ear was common.

In order to check assimilation, the Qing government decreed that when a Manchu bannerman in the provinces passed away, he was to be buried in Beijing and his remaining family was to be repatriated to Beijing. This policy was maintained until the mid-Qing era, but was abolished later in the dynasty for practical reasons.

It is a common misconception that the Eight Banners became obsolete a century or so after the founding of the dynasty. But in places such as Xi'an, military preparedness was very high well past the mid-Qing period. Even during the mid-Qing period, the warrior spirit continued to exist.

A sense of Manchu identity endured and it seems that, contrary to what is widely believed, the Manchu language was used until the very end of the dynasty, as can be seen by the official documents written in Manchu which remain today.

The Manchu's sense of identity endured until the end of the dynasty and contrary to what is widely assumed, the Manchu did not become completely assimilated into the surrounding Han population. In terms of religion, customs, and the position and appearance of women, the Manchu were distinct and such distinctiveness endured until the end of the dynasty (Elliott 2001:265-80).

Conclusion

The Jin dynasty progenitor Hambo emigrated from Goryeo to Jurchen, married a Jurchen woman, and settled there. Beginning from the time of his fourth generation descendant Seok Ro (石魯), his tribe began to gain power, and a few generations afterwards, his descendant Aguda founded the Jin dynasty (Kim 1959:87-9).

This reflects the intimate contact between the Joseon and Jurchen people from around the late fourteenth to the early twentieth century. Many Joseon people fled from their homeland and settled in Jurchen because of their own government's heavy taxation and oppression. Intermarriage was common and Koreans played an important role in developing the Jurchen social economy by introducing agriculture.

The idea that the Jin progenitor was a Korean was widespread in Song, the Jin dynasty, and Goryeo at that time and can be confirmed in the Song dynasty document *Songmojiwen*, documents the Jurchen sent to Goryeo, and also in *Goryeosa* and *Goryeosa jeolyo*. Because the Jurchen thought of Goryeo as their ancestral land, the diplomatic policies the Jurchen took against the Goryeo were always peaceful.

This eastern barbarian consciousness, where the Manchu regarded Silla and Baekje as being their distant relatives, continued from the time of the Jin dynasty until the publication of *Research on Manchu Origins* in the eighteenth-century Qing dynasty.

The fact that states normally considered Korean, such as Buyeo, Samhan, Baekje, and Silla, are included in a book on Manchu origins further supports this fact. The intention of the compilers for claiming Baekje and Silla as their ancestors seems to be to place themselves on an equal cultural level with the Han.

Also, contrary to what is widely believed, the Manchu did not become assimilated into the Han population a century or so after their conquest of mainland China, but retained a sense of self-identity until the end of the dynasty.

Their customs, religion, and lifestyle remained distinct from the Chinese and although the use of the Manchu language has declined, it nevertheless continued to be used until the twentieth century.

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