

WANG KŎN AND THE KORYŎ DYNASTIC ORDER*

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In formally proclaiming the new dynasty of Koryŏ in 918, Wang Kŏn justified his action on the basis of the Confucian concept of the Mandate of Heaven.⁽¹⁾ The significance of this action is self-evident: not being of the royal Chin'gol blood, no legitimate sanction for his dynastic founding could be extracted from the indigenous constitution of Silla. In a society where the status of an individual was measurably determined by birth and expressed in terms of a stratified Kolp'um order, invoking Confucian ideology must have opened up an altogether new dimension fundamentally different from the indigenous social order of Silla. The fact that the Chinese concept placed emphasis on human value acquirable through education introduced new possibilities for one's social advancement particularly in this period of internal upheaval when not a few of the premises of Silla's hereditary basis of power were themselves being seriously challenged. It was in this setting of ideological challenge and institutional decline that the borrowed Chinese ideas had been making impressive inroads among the educated segment of the Silla society.

Wang Kŏn resorted to the Chinese concept of government because, in so doing, the necessary legitimacy for the infant dynasty could be conveniently and honorably secured. But, did Wang Kŏn's invoking the Chinese theory of the mandate herald the discontinuation of the indigenous system of social differentiation in Korea? Did it actually imply a broader power base for the

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- (1) Although Chŏn Haejong asserts that the theory of the Mandate of Heaven was invoked for the first time in Korea at the founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392~1910), evidence clearly indicates that it was used to justify the overthrow of T'aebong and the founding of the Koryŏ Dynasty in 918. Chŏn 1970, pp.45f; KS k.92. 1a-2a, k.1.8b, 9b, k. 127. 1b-2a; Hong S. 1982, pp.236, 237, 240, 245. For the influence of the wu-hsing theory on the founding of Koryŏ, see Ch'oe P. 1978, pp.27-35.

dynasty's new ruling class unhampered by the legacy of the Silla Kolp'um system?

Despite the formal dissolution of the Kolp'um system, the underlying indigenous order was allowed by the new dynasty to undergo no revolutionary change but gradual evolutionary transformation, thus facilitating the eventual resurgence of the former aristocracy under Koryō. The catalyst for this evolutionary transformation was Wang Kōn's policy of alliance with the former aristocrats, a policy which he pursued vigorously after his seizure of power, and which eventually resulted in a large scale absorption of the Silla aristocrats into the new ruling class of Koryō.

Wang Kōn's reacknowledgement of the important political role which Silla aristocrats were to play in the new dynasty was first manifested in a royal proclamation which he issued only thirteen days after the usurpation.⁽²⁾ Through this proclamation he in effect signaled the reversal of the anti-Silla policy of Kung-ye, his former lord in the short-lived T'aebong Kingdom. What is significant in this reversal was the implicit negation of Kung-ye's policy to effect a clean break from the Silla institutions. Admittedly, the reversal of the policy did not herald a full restoration of the Silla Kolp'um system, nor did it signify a complete abandonment of Kung-ye's new innovations. Like its predecessor, the new rebel kingdom of non-Silla origin could not securely rest on the socio-political order of the old kingdom—the successful defiance of which had resulted in the very emergence of the new.

Yet, Wang Kōn's reversal of Kung-ye's anti-Silla aristocratic policy reflected more than the political expediency and tactical finesse of an ambitious usurper. Essentially, it was dictated by the founder's dynastic vision inasmuch as it was structured to the realistic needs of tenth-century Korea. In other words, as the product of a rigidly stratified society, the new dynasty had little real choice but to depend in considerable measure on the former Silla aristocracy for the smooth conduct of its government. It should be recalled that this privileged class of Silla nobility possessed a virtual monopoly of training as well as practical experience in government, and that this same class with its high social prestige had carried with it all

(2) KS k.1. 11b. By this proclamation, Wang Kōn abandoned most of Kung-ye's innovations in the government. Although exceptions were made to those innovations that had already been widely accepted by the people, Wang Kōn's action in effect implied the restoration of the old Silla institutions, facilitating the eventual resurgence of the old Silla aristocracy under Koryō.

authority essential to effective government. Thus, from the purely practical standpoint of shrewd political statesmanship, while dismissing for the moment the consideration of sound military strategy, the cooperation of the entrenched former aristocracy was necessary if the new dynasty were to secure the political basis on which an orderly transfer of power could be effected.

Because the rigidly stratified Kōlp'um order had long been the ultimate determinant of social differentiation in Silla society, social functions had been minutely defined in accordance with one's hereditary social status. The rigidity of the Kōlp'um rule permitted no one to disrupt the inner sanctity of its social structure, and it took the final political disintegration of the Silla Kingdom to witness any meaningful decline of its order. Yet, Kung-ye, an abandoned son of a Silla king, who though rose to be the founder of a short-lived rebeldom, failed to see this obvious reality of tenth century Korea. In fact, it was his violent antagonism toward the Silla aristocracy that eventually alienated his followers who overthrew him in the end.

It therefore fell on Wang Kōn, a son of the local chieftain of Songak (present Kaesŏng) and a brilliant naval strategist serving under Kung-ye, to realize the true nature of the social forces working in his society and to forge out of it a policy that ultimately proved to be successful. The question is then: how did Wang Kōn, a man of non-Silla aristocratic origin, ever come to realize the crucial role the Silla aristocrats were to play in a tripartite struggle for hegemony in the Korean peninsula, especially when the very socio-political system sustaining the old aristocracy were crumbling down at its foundations? What is more, why did he ever come to advocate a policy of alliance with the declining Silla aristocracy—a policy seemingly so contradictory to the politico-social dictums of his lord, Kung-ye?

Although it is not known precisely when the schism had first developed between Wang Kōn and his lord, the seeds of their animosity may well have been sown by disagreements over new military options that became available to T'aebong in the wake of Wang Kōn's successful Na-ju naval campaign against the rear of Hu Paekche. It should be recalled that the outcome of this historic naval campaign had secured for T'aebong a firm control of this strategic gateway and the surrounding coastal waters, sealing off Hu Paekche's main outlet to the Yellow Sea.⁽³⁾ At the same time, it also promised for T'aebong a new possibility of encircling Hu Paekche by

(3) Hino 1961 July, pp. 105-107.

both land and sea.

As the gaining of the Na-ju area had already opened a second front against Hu Paekche, it may have been only natural for Wang Kōn to envision a strategy of complete encirclement of his enemy through the conclusion of a series of military alliances with Silla nobles who were under increasing military pressure from Hu Paekche in the eastern front. To Wang Kōn who made only a few years ago the dramatic Yang-ju rescue mission in response to an urgent appeal from its Silla aristocratic commander defending the southern access to the Silla capital⁽⁴⁾, the idea of alliance with Silla nobles must have appeared within the realm of possibility. In fact, if Wang Kōn had proposed such an alliance at this time, as he probably did, it could not have been the first time that he had done so. In all probability, "the Frontier Pacification and Expansion Strategy" which he submitted upon his return from the Yang-ju mission in 903 may have contained a similar idea. Furthermore, Wang Kōn could even have conceived the Na-ju campaign itself as a result of the Yang-ju mission—the mission which apparently took him to skirt along Hu Paekche's southwestern coast enroute to relieve the beleaguered Silla commander at Yang-ju, clear around the cape on the southeastern seaboard of the Korean peninsula.⁽⁵⁾ Such an alliance, moreover, promised a new supply of human and material resources yet under the Silla aristocratic control, which hopefully would be utilized in T'aebong's war effort against Hu Paekche.

(4) The *Koryŏ sa* provides us only with a terse description of this dramatic rescue mission. The entire passage on the mission in the KS is as follows:

"[In] this year [903] Yang-ju Commander Kim In-hum sent an urgent message. [Kung-] ye ordered T'aejo [Wang Kōn] to go to aid [him]. When [Wang Kōn] returned, [Kung-] ye asked [him] about the frontier-matters. T'aejo presented a strategy of [how] to pacify the frontier while expanding the boundary. Those in attendance all took notice of it. [Kung-] ye, too, thought it was ingenious. [He] promoted [Wang Kōn's] rank to Alch'an," KS k. 1. 2a.

Established as one of Silla's nine regional military commands (chu) in 757, Yang-ju (present Yangsan) served as the first line of defense guarding the southern access to the Silla capital through the Naktong River. Suematsu 1975, pp. 62-72; TYS k. 22. 12a-20a, k. 23. 24a-26b.

(5) As for the probable route taken by Wang Kōn for the mission, an overland operation would have been nearly impossible in view of the widespread civil strife in Silla at the time. On the other hand, a naval operation along the seaboard should have given him an easier access to Yang-ju, particularly when we consider his family's maritime background as well as his subsequent rise as a successful naval commander in T'aebong.

To Kung-ye's dismay, however, no matter how strategically brilliant Wang Kŏn's vision may have been, it presupposed the action of a pro-Silla aristocratic overture, which to the general policy aims of Kung-ye carried implications of no small consequence. Embittered by his past treatment at the hands of the Silla aristocracy, Kung-ye was predisposed to pursue a violent anti-Silla policy and was consequently unable to reconcile himself to a policy that required a complete abandonment of his own emotional dictates against the Silla nobility. Herein may lie the basis of the schism between Wang Kŏn and Kung-ye, as well as the turning point in Wang Kŏn's career which ultimately led to the usurpation of the throne held by his own lord, Kung-ye.

Contained in the disagreement arising from policy considerations in the wake of the historic Na-ju campaign, if not earlier in Wang Kŏn's "Frontier Pacification and Expansion Strategy," were then the seeds of his drift toward a pro-Silla proposition, which gradually led him to throw his influence and power behind those elements within the rebel camp prone to favor such a policy. It is evident, therefore, that Wang Kŏn had rallied around him the personal support of a significant segment of the former Silla aristocrats who had expatriated to T'aebong well before 918.⁽⁶⁾ Upon his appointment as Chief Counselor (Sijung) by Kung-ye, Wang Kŏn's handling of a case involving the leaders of a former Silla minor capital, Ch'ŏngju, who were charged with treason serves to illustrate Wang Kŏn's growing bond with the Silla-oriented elements of T'aebong.⁽⁷⁾

It was not until Wang Kŏn founded his own dynasty, however, that he openly pursued a definite policy of alliance with Silla. It is interesting to note in this connection that out of the three rebel leaders who founded rebel kingdoms of their own during the Later Three Kingdoms period, it was only Kim Kung-ye who openly dared to challenge the Silla political order⁽⁸⁾, and it was also he who first went down in utter failure. In striking contrast, neither Yi Kyŏn-hwŏn nor Wang Kŏn had dared to challenge the Silla dynastic order. Yi Kyŏn-hwŏn, it will be recalled, successfully invaded the

(6) Although the meager sources available on the T'aebong kingdom give us only an incomplete picture of those Silla aristocrats who had rallied around Wang Kŏn at this time, they certainly included Ch'oe Ŭng, Pak Yu, Pak Sur-hŭi, Kim Kŭn-gyŏm, Kim Un-gyu, Kim Haeng-do, Pak Chir-yŏng, Kim Nak, Kim Ŭn, and perhaps Pak Su-mun and his brother Su-gyŏng. KS k. 92. 8a-12b, 15b-16a, k. 1. 2b-3b, 8b-13b; Yi Kidong 1978, p. 49f; Yi S. 1976.

(7) KS k. 1. 4ab.

(8) SS k. 50. 1a-7b; Takeda 1966, pp. 26-31.

Silla capital in 927 and had the reigning Silla King Kyōngae (924~927) commit suicide; yet, he dutifully installed on the throne another member of the Silla royalty, Kim Pu, before he and his troops triumphantly withdrew from the capital.⁽⁹⁾ Significantly, both Wang Kōn and Yi Kyōn-hwōn confined their respective claims strictly to the old domains of the ancient Koguryō and Paekche Kingdoms, while simultaneously respecting Silla's sovereignty in her original domain.

Wang Kōn's formal acquiescence in the Silla's sovereignty was undoubtedly based on his realistic calculations of the needs and chances of success available to his infant dynasty. Fully conscious of the potential value of the old aristocracy in building his dynastic foundation—particularly with their political experience and social prestige—Wang Kōn took the calculated risk of incorporating elements of the old aristocracy in the ruling circle of the new dynasty. He apparently believed it to be imperative for the new kingdom to secure a solid foundation on indigenous grounds. For, despite its internal discord and decay, the lingering political and social influence of the former ruling class inevitably made its services vital to an effective government in tenth-century Korea. In short, from the standpoint of the new dynasty, its best chances of success lay in the interests of the new order.

In this respect, the founder of the Koryō Kingdom was, unquestionably, as much a political realist as he was a shrewd military strategist. In the pervasive strength of the indigenous institutions he recognized the futility of trying to uproot the vital interests of the entrenched nobility, and chose rather to utilize them in conjunction with the newly risen power group, like himself, whose power base lay outside the aristocratic constitution of Silla. Who, then, was this newly risen power group, and what role did it play in the founding of the Koryō dynasty? In what significant way did it differ from the old aristocracy, and precisely where did the basis of its power lay?

In general, the new group was composed of upstarts who had little in common with the old aristocracy. Wang Kōn himself was an example of this new breed. Though born a son of the local chieftain of Songak, his family's status was nevertheless far from distinguished by the social scale of the Kolp'um order.⁽¹⁰⁾ Wang Kōn himself admitted his low social origins

(9) SS k. 50. 10b-14b.

(10) Ha 1969; 1974, pp. 17-23. For an interesting new study of the predynastic

in one of his earliest dynastic proclamations.⁽¹¹⁾ Available evidence also makes it clear that underlying the family's basis of power was not its Kolp'um status, but rather its unmistakable involvement in the maritime commerce, mainly based on the use of river transport system and offshore waters.⁽¹²⁾ The family evidently profitted considerably from this lucrative maritime enterprise especially after the land transport system became paralyzed amid the civil strife of late Silla.

It is more than probable, therefore, that Wang Kŏn owed much of his initial advancement in the rebel camp of T'aebong to the family's substantial economic and political resources. And, that he was particularly esteemed as a proven naval strategist is hardly unexpected in view of both the experience and interest the family seems to have long maintained in the flourishing maritime operations.⁽¹³⁾ Neither is it strange, therefore, that among his early followers were local strongmen of obscure social origins but with

legend of the Wang family found in the KS, see Rogers 1982-3.

(11) KS k. 1. 12b.

(12) Except Ha Hyŏn'gang (1969) who attributes Wang Kŏn's rise mainly to his personal success under Kung-ye, nearly all studies on Wang Kŏn's family background find a definite link between his phenomenal rise as a naval commander and his family's presumed success in the overseas trade with China. Yet, this widely accepted finding is, as aptly pointed out by Rogers (1982-3, pp. 12f), largely based on historians' attempts "to discern a factual nucleus by demythologizing" the predynastic legend of the family. Pak 1965; 1977; Yi Y. 1963; Hino 1961 July; Kim C. 1964. On the basis of the available evidence, I however surmise that Wang Kŏn's father, Yung, was a village chief in Songak (as evidenced by his rank, Sach'an) that the family's fortune received a decisive boost by, if it did not originate in, the establishment of Silla's foremost northern defense command in P'aegang-jin in 782, that the family's maritime engagement was mainly in the seaboard trade along the Silla coast with the old nobles of P'aegang-jin as its principal patron-clientele, and that the family had little involvement in the overseas trade with China (as evidenced, for example, in its lack of a surname—a must for the Silla merchant directly dealing with China trade—until Wang Kŏn's or perhaps his father's time). Fujita 1953 (also 1963); Pang 1973; Inoue 1974; Suematsu 1975; Yi Kidong 1976; Kimura 1979; Ri (Yi S.) 1981; Pak 1969; Yoshida 1980; Ch'oe K. 1981.

(13) Although there is no direct evidence supporting the Wang family's lengthy maritime experience and interest, the fact that Wang Kŏn's grandmother and father were the principle benefactors of a Buddhist temple near Songak, headed by a priest of Silla aristocratic background from P'yŏngsan (which was also the site of the P'aegang-jin command) indicate such possibility. Kim T. 1975, pp. 81ff; SSCC, pp. 36f. For other circumstantial evidence, see Kim K. 1977; Yoshida 1980; Son 1977; Kitamura 1978; 1979; Ch'oe W. 1981; Hino 1960-61.

distinctively identifiable common maritime interests and backgrounds. Thus, among the earliest supporters of Wang Kōn were two of his consort families, the Yu's of Chōngju and the O's of Najū.⁽¹⁴⁾ Significantly, both of these families were affluent merchants who, though of socially low origins, represented the powerful maritime interests of the key trading and naval ports of Chōngju and Mokp'o, respectively.⁽¹⁵⁾ Similarly, out of the four generals who played key roles in the coup d'état of 918 which overthrew T'aebong, at least Pok Chi-gyōm and Sin Sung-gyōm were from areas significantly linked with then thriving maritime enterprise, while all four generals had apparently risen from non-Silla aristocratic backgrounds.⁽¹⁶⁾

Because it was largely due to the relentless efforts and loyal support of such men that Wang Kōn was able to found his dynasty in 918, the preservation of their continued loyalty as well as their basis of power were of vital importance to the new dynasty. Furthermore, their presence among the elite ruling circle acted as a healthy counterbalance to the former Silla nobility recruited to serve in the new government of Koryō. Keenly aware of the risks inherent in the incompatible socio-political interests of the former nobility in the new dynasty of non-Silla blood, Wang Kōn sought to build his dynastic authority on the strength of the non-Silla aristocratic forces. Out of his twenty-nine consorts—most of whom represented politically arranged marriages—Wang Kōn chose to bestow the queenship upon only three consorts from two different families, the above mentioned Yu's of Chōngju and O's of Najū.⁽¹⁷⁾

The importance with which Wang Kōn valued his alliances with such clans as sustaining pillars of his dynasty is perhaps most poignantly seen in his selection of Prince Mu (Hyejong, 943~945) as his rightful heir to the throne. The first-born son of Wang Kōn and the Lady O of Najū, Prince Mu was hand-picked by his father despite the threat of implacable opposition which potentially bore perilous repercussions to the political security of the dynasty.⁽¹⁸⁾ In order to strengthen the political position of his heir-apparent, Wang Kōn chose as Prince Mu's protector the loyal warrior Pak Sur-hūi, a man of Silla aristocratic background, who was from

(14) KS k. 88. 1b-3b, 6a.

(15) Kang 1977, pp. 415f.

(16) Kang 1977, p. 418, n. 17; Yi S. 1976, p. 19f.

(17) KS k. 88. 1b-8a.

(18) Kang 1977, pp. 412-418.

an area prominently linked with the maritime trade with China.⁽¹⁹⁾

How is it that these men of non-aristocratic origin ever managed to amass the economic and political power to the extent of significantly assisting the founding of a new dynasty when the restrictive social order under which they lived specifically denied them such power? Or adversely, how did the Kolp'um society ever allow the men of socially low origins to rise as far as they did when the political order under which they lived expressly prohibited this? To answer these questions even in broad outline would require more than the purported aim and scope of this paper. I would like, however, to offer one general observation which should help to shed some light on the understanding of this epochal development in the late Silla period.

It was the peculiarity of the Silla Kolp'um system that despite the strict differentiation of social functions, there is still no evidence to show that the private ownership of property and the pursuit of profit-making activities were altogether prohibited. On the contrary, evidence suggests that under the Kolp'um system no specific restriction was placed on either private enterprise or profit-making activities, though formal restrictions were imposed on the outward expression of wealth in accordance with one's given social status.⁽²⁰⁾ Restrictions, therefore, were for the purpose of social and functional differentiation, and not necessarily for economic differentiation. In fact, once the principle of private ownership was universally recognized in Silla, artificial restrictions on the outward display of material possession became in all practicality almost meaningless. The Kolp'um code, in other words, did not proscribe the actual acquisition of wealth.

The bitter and belated lesson Silla learned from her age-old practice of the Kolp'um order, the heart of Silla's political foundation, was openly challenged and defied by those whose wealth and influence demanded new recognition of their power, something which Silla never intended to have happen under the Kolp'um order. Those who had newly acquired political power through their successful defiance of the Kolp'um code naturally had no wish to jeopardize their recent gains by the continued acceptance of the aristocratic order, for the likelihood was too great that in so doing, their hard-earned basis of power would surely be undermined. What was at stake for the non-Silla aristocratic group was the preservation of their new gains

(19) Kang 1977, pp. 418f.

(20) Yi U. 1965; SS k. 2. 6b-8a; k. 33. 1a-5b.

which had become a *fait accompli* during the period of civil strife in the late Silla. It was their underlying preoccupation with this problem that gave a revolutionary character to the new Koryō dynasty which they themselves had helped to found.

Their newly acquired positions, however, still needed to be sanctioned and formally legitimized on a permanent ideological basis by the political order of the new dynasty. Therefore, the new form of dynastic order, as was the case under the Silla Kolp'um system, became of crucial importance for the permanent accommodation of the new power configuration in Korea. That is to say, the new basis of the control system in the Koryō Kingdom was hopefully to be based on the dynasty's new social order. Political alignment based on social origins as was crystallized in the fateful confrontation of Silla and non-Silla aristocratic forces in 945 was the natural consequence of the amalgamation of political forces gathered around the Koryō founder.⁽²¹⁾ Because of their obscure origins, the non-Silla aristocratic upstarts inevitably emerged as a group socially, culturally, and ideologically distinguishable from those of Silla aristocratic background in the Koryō government.

The contrasting outlook of the two groups had remained sharply under focus, partly as a result of Wang Kōn's conscious efforts to maintain a distinctive political identity for his dynasty, which at the same time contributed to the gradual polarization of his officials into two socially incompatible groups. The death of the founder and the resultant uncertainties over the future political direction of the dynasty provided the occasion for the two opposing groups to turn their precarious relationships into open hostility. The embroilment which erupted in 945 resulted in much more than a victory for the officials of Silla aristocratic background in Koryō, for this victory effectively eliminated the only group powerful enough to challenge the supremacy of the traditional ruling class. The outcome of what the traditional historians blithely termed "the succession struggle of King Hyejong" constituted an epochal event in the history of Korea: it reaffirmed the indigenous institutions, such as endogamous practices which protected the hereditary privileges of the old aristocracy, and it reinstated their aristocratic supremacy beyond challenge.

The newly emerged order under the Koryō Dynasty, however, could not be and was not the same as the old order under Silla. The new order

(21) Kang 1977.

differed from the old in at least two important ways. First, under the new order there no longer was the rigid social and functional differentiation between the former Silla kol-status holders and those of the tup'um-status holders in the service of the Koryŏ government. Though the former kol-status holders were mostly absorbed into the new aristocracy, they no longer retained their royal status as the monopolizers of the top echelons of government, but rather they became members of the ranking subjects of the Koryŏ king.⁽²²⁾ In their ranks were also an important segment of the former tup'um holders, many of whom had won new status through their individual talent, as well as a result of their meritorious services to the new Dynasty.⁽²³⁾ Their advancement to the top in the political and social ladders of Koryŏ demonstrates an evolutionary process in the historical development of the Korean social classes as much as it was an on-going feature of the indigenous order in Korea.

Secondly, the predominant outlook of the new ruling elite was no longer that of the Silla warrior aristocrat but rather that of the Confucian literati-official. As such, rather than the rigorous code of the Hwarang, they expounded the benevolent virtues of the Confucian sage and exalted the cultural refinement of the Sino-Buddhistic world. In their ideological and cultural commitment they frequently indulged in the shallow display of a cultural borrower more than the creative pursuit of an originator, while their taste for higher culture was more refined than that of the most sophisticated Silla aristocratic warrior ever was.⁽²⁴⁾ Yet, in spite of this nominal resemblance they in fact retained many features of their Silla aristocratic heritage. In the main, noble birth took a priority far higher than individual merit or moral virtue acquirable through Confucian education ever did.⁽²⁵⁾ They faithfully observed endogamy as a matter of honor and thus reconstructed social barriers as formidable as ever.⁽²⁶⁾ In short, the new dynastic order of Koryŏ manifested a new system which resembled the Confucian model in form and name, but which was in reality built on the old indigenous social and political tradition.

(22) Yi S. 1976 July; 1976.

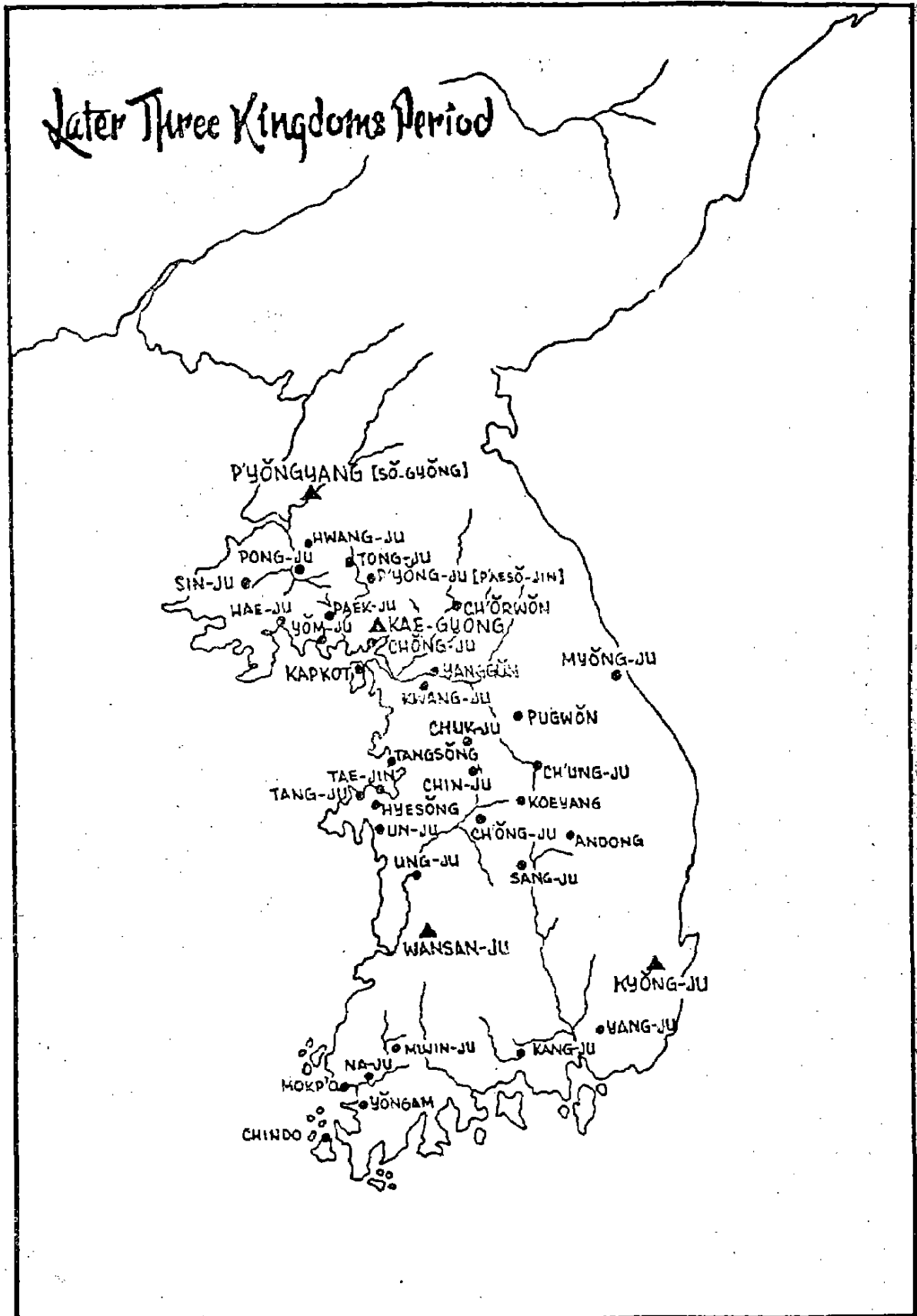
(23) Yi Kibaek 1974 June; Yi Kidong 1978; Kim K. 1973.

(24) Kang 1974; Hŏ 1981 Jan.

(25) *Han'guk sa* 5 (1975).

(26) *Han'guk sa* 6 (1975); Hŏ 1981 June; Ch'oe C. 1982; 1983; Hong S. 1983.

Map. Korean in Later Three Kingdoms Period



ABBREVIATION

- KS: Chöng, Inji et al. *Koryö sa*. 3 vols. Seoul: Yönhüi taehak kyo, 1955.
- SS: Kim, Pusik et al. *Samguk sagi*. Tokyo: Gagushuin Toyo bunka kenkyu jo, 1964.
- SSCC: Yun, Hoe et al. *Sejong sillok chiri chi*, ed. and rev. by Chusu-in Chosa-ka. Keijo: Chosen sotoku fu, 1938.
- TYS: No, Sasin et al. *Sinjüng Tongguk yöji süngnam*, rev. and enl. by Yi Haeng et al. Seoul: Tongguk munhwa sa, 1964.

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〈국 문 요 약〉

고려태조 王建은 신라 骨品制에 기반을 가지지 못하였기 때문에 유교사상을 건국의 이념으로 제시하였다. 그러나 골품제의 해체에도 불구하고 왕건은 신라의 토착적인 질서로부터 혁명적인 변혁을 추진한 것은 아니고 점진적인 변화를 추구하였다. 왕건이 弓裔와는 달리 고려의 새로운 지배계급 가운데 정치적 경험이 풍부한 신라의 귀족을 광범하게 포섭하는 친신라정책을 추진한 것은 이러한 사실을 반영한다.

고려의 주도적인 지배층은 신흥세력이었다. 송악 출신인 왕건 자신의 집안이 하천과 해안(특히 신라지역연안)에서의 상업활동을 통하여 경제적 부를 형성하였다. 왕건의 친신라정책은 이러한 그의 경제적 기반과도 관련이 있는 것이었다. 그의 유력한 妻族인 淸州 柳氏와 羅州 吳氏, 고려개창을 주도한 卜智謙과 申崇謙 등의 장수들도 水上交易를 통하여 성장하였다.

고려왕조는 이러한 경제적 성장을 배경으로 한 신흥세력의 지원 아래 개창되었다. 그런데 왕건이 친신라정책을 취하고, 후계자 혜종의 보호를 위해 신라귀족적인 기반을 가진 朴述熙를 등용함으로써 신라귀족세력과 반신라적인 신흥세력 사이에 고려의 정치질서 재편을 둘러싼 대립이 초래되었다. 신흥세력은 사회적·문화적·이념적으로 신라와는 상이한 정치질서를 수립하려 하였지만, 945년의 「王規의 亂」은 결국 신라귀족세력에게 정치적 승리를 안겨주었고 이것이 이후 고려왕조의 질서를 규정지었다. 그리하여 近親婚과 같은 구귀족제의 유산 위에 구귀족세력의 정치적 우세가 강화되었다.

그러나 고려왕조의 질서는 두가지 점에서 신라의 구질서와는 달랐다. 첫째 신라의 骨制와 頭品制의 엄격한 차별성이 해소되어 고려의 관료체제 속에 흡수된 점이다. 이는 한국사회계급의 역사적 발전이 점진적으로 이루어짐을 보여준다. 둘째 새로운 지배 엘리트는 武人的인 신라귀족이 아니고 儒敎的인 소양을 갖춘 문관관료였지만, 그러나 귀족적인 혈통이 유교적 규범보다 우월한 신라귀족의 유산은 여전히 남아 있었다.

요컨대 고려의 새로운 왕조질서는 형식상·명분상으로는 유교이념을 표방하였으나 실제로는 신라적인 사회·정치적 전통 위에 기초하여 구축되었다.