Himalayan Nature
Representations and Reality

Edited by Erika Sandman and Riika J. Virtanen

Studia Orientalia 109

Himalayan Nature
Representations and Reality

Edited by
Erika Sandman and Riika J. Virtanen

Helsinki 2011

Himalayan Nature: Representations and Reality
Studia Orientalia, vol. 109, 2011

Societas Orientalis Fennica
c/o Department of World Cultures
P.O. Box 59 (Unioninkatu 38 B)
FI-00014 University of Helsinki
FINLAND

Editor
Lotta Aunio

Typesetting
Lotta Aunio

Cover photo
Nakza Drolma: "mTho ris la, a mountain pass at the top of Brag dkar sprel rdzong, and a Buddhist pilgrimage site in Xinhai County, Qinghai Province, People's Republic of China."

ISSN 0039-3282
ISBN 978-951-9380-75-9

WS Bookwell Oy
Jyväskylä 2011

CONTENTS

REVIEW ARTICLE:

CORRECTNESS AND CONTROVERSIES IN ASIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Juha Janhunen

History cannot be written free of values, and the closer to the present day we move the less hope there is for the historian to reach any credible level of objectiveness. This is particularly obvious when we compare national historiographies, which often defend diametrically opposite points of view concerning past controversies. The principal factor regulating the historiographical picture that is transmitted to us is the well-known circumstance that the losers rarely get their voice heard. One possible conclusion is that history always goes the "right" way. It is, however, also possible that history is more diversified than the historians writing for the winners would like to admit.

The United Nations is an obvious club of winners in the post-World War II world, which is why any circumstances that might be understood as favourable for the losers have systematically been ignored or distorted in the postwar international historiographical discourse. Incidentally, the same is true of the situation following the Cold War, whose losers have received little sympathy from the New World Order led by the United States. Under such conditions it is certainly difficult for an organization like the UNESCO, serving directly under the United Nations, to produce a balanced view on the history of any given part of the world. This is the background against which the final volume of the UNESCO series on Central Asian history has to be seen:

> *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. VI. Towards the contemporary period: from the mid-nineteenth to the end of the twentieth century. Co-editors: **Madhavan K. Palat & Anara Tabyshalieva**. Multiple History Series. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2005. 1033 pp., incl. 8 maps. ISBN 92-3-103985-7 (hardcover).

The first five volumes of the series (reviewed by the present author in *Studia Orientalia*, vols 82/1997 and 101/2007) covered the period up to the mid-nineteenth century, which was still at a rather safe distance from the controversies of

the present day. The period covered by the final volume now extends till the end of the twentieth century and brings the reader from the classic situation of the Great Game over major turbulences like the revolutions and civil wars in China (1911–1949) and Russia (1917–1922) up to recent or on-going events like the Afghan crisis (since 1973) and the building of the new post-Soviet Central Asian nation states (since 1991).

Thanks to *Pax Sovietica*, World War II had relatively little direct impact on most parts of Central Asia, although actual military operations did take place in the west and south of the region (Iran, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus), as well as in the east (Mongolia and Manchuria). Among the indirect consequences of the war there were the forced transferral of several hundred thousand Koreans from the Russian Maritime Region to Central Asia (1937), the unopposed annexation of the Tannu-Tuvan Republic by the Soviet Union (1944), and the formation of Pakistan (1947). Ultimately, most of Central Asia became divided between the Soviet and Chinese spheres, which meant, interestingly, that the United States was almost completely excluded from the region until the end of the Cold War.

The UNESCO volume follows the general model of the series in that it consists of a rather loose collection of separate chapters, 31 altogether, written by as many as 34 regional and international specialists. The chapters are divided into three thematic "parts", titled "Continuity and change" (Chapters 1–7), "Political changes and state formation" (Chapters 8–20), as well as "Environment, society, and culture" (Chapters 21–31). From the point of view of the definition of the region, the most revealing is the second part, which contains separate chapters on Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, South Siberia, Mongolia, "Western China" (Xinjiang), North India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, as well as Iran. Conspicuously, there is no chapter on Tibet. Judging by the index, Inner Mongolia is not even mentioned in the book, though, to be exact, it is mentioned once in a translator's footnote (n. 5 on p. 395).

In general, it may be said that the authors present the actors on the Central Asian scene in a relatively neutral light. Even the colonial policies of Russia and Great Britain receive their occasional share of recognition for the undeniable social and economic benefits they brought. On the other hand, while the appropriation of land from the nomads to the Russian settlers is criticized, there is no similar criticism of the impact of the Chinese immigration into various parts of Eastern Central Asia. When the author of the chapter on "Western China" (Qin Huibin) speaks of "the struggle of the peoples of Xinjiang against invaders" he does not mean Han Chinese, but the British, Russians, and "Turks". The same author uses terms like "separatist cliques" for the Uighur nationalists, and "liberation" for the Chinese Communist occupation of East Turkestan.

The country-by-country chapters mostly focus on the Soviet period. For some newly independent nation states, like Turkmenistan, the post-Soviet period is completely ignored, possibly for political reasons, while other countries, like Uzbekistan, are covered also for the more recent years. These chapters are typically written by regional scholars, perhaps appointed by their governments, while the chapters on South Siberia (D. Vasil'ev) and Mongolia (T. Nakami, Ts. Batbayar, J. Boldbaatar) are more professionally written and offer valid information on even such unpleasant details like the Soviet purges of Buddhism in Mongolia (1937–1939).

Due to the still on-going chaos, Afghanistan is probably the most challenging part of Central Asia to be dealt with in an international history book. The chapter on Afghanistan (C. Noelle-Karimi, W. Maley, A. Saikal) manages to present the facts in a transparent and remarkably objective way, though the text follows the developments only up to the year 2001. Clearly, although Afghanistan has never been a haven of peace, the modern problems of the country may also be seen as the combined impact of bad decisions made by ambitious but irresponsible persons, among whom a prominent place is occupied by Mohammed Daoud Khan (because of his rivalry with the legal monarch) and Ronald Reagan (because of his support to the Mujahidin terrorists). One only wonders when, if ever, the chapter on the history of the Afghan war can be finished.

The chapters on environment and culture are, of course, much less controversial. Even so, they provide ample opportunities for interesting comparisons. There are, for instance, three chapters on the status of women. From them it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that of all actors in Central Asia, Russia, even in its Soviet manifestation, has always provided the greatest degree of "rights" for women. One should also consider the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from this point of view: in the modern period, the people of Afghanistan, men and women alike, have probably never experienced such a flood of secular freedom and educational opportunities as during the brief era under Soviet protection. Naturally, such a point of view could not easily find its way into a UNESCO publication.

Probably the most useful parts in the volume are those which have no politics in them. There are brief surveys of premodern and contemporary art in Iran and Afghanistan (W. Floor, C. Adle, S.P. Verma), Mongolia (C. Atwood), and several other parts of the region. A particularly interesting and less often discussed topic is architecture and urban planning (M. Azzout). Similar chapters are offered on literature, though the survey is focused on the "national" languages, including Persian-Dari-Tajik, Urdu, Central Asian Turkic, as well as Mongolian. Among

the small number of regional languages also covered are Kashmiri, Punjabi, and Sindhi. No mention is made of the existence of any literature in Tibetan.

In retrospection, in spite of its shortcomings, but in view of the challenging political circumstances under which it was created, the UNESCO series on Central Asian history has to be seen as a successful enterprise. The six volumes were published in a regular succession during a period of no more than 13 years (1992–2005), preceded by a preparative period of 12 years (1980–1992). With the series now completed, this is the most comprehensive and up-to-date general survey of a region whose importance is only growing.

In our Western society it is increasingly difficult to see who are the winners and who are the losers. For the moment it would seem that on the winning side there are the New Social Liberalists, whose agenda it is to propagate "democratic values", "political freedom", and "human rights" to the rest ot the world, and especially to Asia. A branch of this brand of thinking is feminism, which is now winning land even in such a traditional field as Altaic Studies, as is suggested by the choice of topic for the 44th Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference, held at Walberberg, Germany, in August, 2001. The proceedings took six years to edit, but when they finally were published they form, at least externally, one of the more handsome PIAC volumes:

> **Veronika Veit** (ed.), *The Role of Women in the Altaic World.* Permanent International Altaistic Conference, 44th Meeting, Walberberg, 26–31 August 2001. Asiatische Forschungen 152. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007. 335 pp. ISSN 0571-320X, ISBN 978-3-447-05537-6 (hardcover).

The sudden focus on "women" is, of course, curious since no volume specifically devoted to "the role of men in the Altaic World" has ever been published. Even so, one can see that it has not been difficult to find topics filling the requirements. For instance, a scholar who has studied Middle Mongolian names can easily also write on "Female personal names in Middle Mongolian sources" (Volker Rybatzki), while another scholar normally writing on the Japanese language can now discuss the "Female variant of Japanese" (V.M. Alpatov). The range of possible topics circling around "women" is, indeed, amazing, and the book contains a wide selection of articles dealing with female spirits, heroines, goddesses, witches, empresses, and ordinary housewives. Even topics such as gynaecology and polymastia (extra breasts) get their proper share of attention.

Although the concept of the "Altaic World" has been criticized, it catches well the situation in which Altaic Studies is today. As the existence of a genetic relationship between the "Altaic" languages looks more and more improbable, it is

inevitable to focus on the cultural and linguistic parallels shared on an areal basis by the "Altaic" peoples, that is, the modern and historical populations inhabiting the belt that extends from Anatolia and the Volga region through Siberia and Central Asia to Korea and Japan. When understood in this broad geographical and historical sense, this is a very relevant field of study. The PIAC volume shows, however, how the field is becoming increasingly compartmentalized, as every scholar focuses on his or her own narrow topic of research, which often covers only a single locality, population, or language.

The present state of Altaic Studies becomes obvious if we take a closer look at the division of the topics represented in the volume. Of the 37 contributions, as many as 14 deal with the Mongols (including the Oirat and Kalmuck), Mongolia, or the Mongolian language (including Middle Mongol). Manchu topics are discussed in 4 papers, Turkish (including Oghuz) topics also in 4, and Tuvinian in 2, while the rest of the papers are divided between topics pertaining to Japanese, Bashkir, Khitan Liao, as well as East Turkestan (both ancient and modern). While this demonstrates the general importance of Mongolic Studies for the field, it also shows how marginalized the comparative point of view has become, although it forms, and should always form, the foundation of all Altaic Studies.

Among the few comparative papers in the volume, those on folklore and mythology are among the most representative. Mihály Dobrovits contributes an excellent paper on what he identifies as the myth of "The Maiden of the Tower", with attestations extending from China to the Mediterranean. Another exemplary piece of scholarship is the paper of Ruth I. Meserve on "The Red Witch", which deals with the folkloric and historical motifs connected with smallpox among a wide range of Siberian peoples. Denis Sinor's paper "Observations on women in early and medieval Inner Asian history" also reveals a broad comparative perspective that is difficult to gain without decades of experience. Obviously, comparative historical and folkloric research is a promising field in the Altaic context.

What is, however, alarming is that the volume contains no single paper on comparative linguistics – in this context, we have to disregard the deplorably dilettantish "study" by Nina Solntseva (the widow of Vadim Solntsev) of the "Kinship terms and third person pronouns in Mongolian and South-East Asian languages". This signals the serious decline in the art of comparative linguistics that has taken place not only in Altaic Studies, but also generally in international linguistics as a result of the postwar obsession with "new paradigms". Apparently, few Altaists realize that comparative linguistics is the cornerstone of their field irrespective of whether the "Altaic" languages are mutually related or

not. This is a problem that should be amended if the field is to be saved. In spite of growing interest in Altaic Studies in the Far East, much of the recent work on the comparative aspects of the "Altaic" languages is not up to the level that used to be reached in the past. Also, the field is still very scarcely represented in the universities of the world, the few exceptions being Bloomington, Debrecen, and Helsinki.

Fortunately, comparative linguistics in Altaic Studies is not yet dead, and interesting contributions are still being made to the field also in this framework. Among them is the new monograph of J. Marshall Unger on the relations of Korean and Japanese:

> **J. Marshall Unger**, *The Role of Contact in the Origins of the Japanese and Korean Languages.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009. xiii + 207 + 1 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-3279-7 (hardcover).

There are many opinions as to how the relations of Korean and Japanese should be understood. Nobody has ever denied the obvious similarities between the two languages, but the question has been whether these similarities are genetic ("sprung from some common source") or contact-induced. G.J. Ramstedt, the founder of modern comparative Altaic Studies, classified Korean as an "Altaic" language, while Japanese was, according to him, of some other origin, although it may well be described as "Altaicized". R.A. Miller later "added" Japanese to the Altaic "family", a view still held today not only by himself but also by some younger Altaists, perhaps most notably Martine Robbeets. On the other hand, the idea of a bilateral genetic relationship between Korean and Japanese, with the possible exclusion of the other "Altaic" languages, was developed by the late Samuel Martin, and has subsequently been supported by others, notably John B. Whitman and Bjarke Frellesvig.

In this framework Unger's position is close to Martin's, whom he frequently quotes, although it seems that the issue of genetic relationship was never of central importance for Martin. Unger's point is, however, that although Korean and Japanese are, according to him, "related", they have also undergone periods of mutual contact, due to which they are even more similar than they would otherwise be. In spite of its triviality, this is an important observation in a situation where the uncritical mass comparisons favoured by the most ardent adherents of monogenetic explanations typically ignore the fact that even related languages can influence each other on an areal basis. Since Korean and Japanese are spoken in adjacent areas, a large proportion of their shared features must, in any case, be due to contacts, and it is important to eliminate the illusion of similarity created

by these contacts before progressing to the level of deeper genetic studies. This is what Unger sets out to do.

After first reviewing the general theories of language contact, Unger proceeds (in Chapter 1) to discussing the possible frameworks in which Korean and Japanese can have interacted in the past. He correctly concludes that although there were contacts and population movements over the Korea Strait in historical times, the foundation for the linguistic similarities was laid in Korea, where early forms of both Korean (Proto-Koreanic) and Japanese (Pre-Proto-Japonic) were spoken in proto- and possibly pre-historical times. He also correctly links the "introduction" of Japanese (Japonic) to the Japanese Islands with the Bronze-Age Yayoi culture, which also brought both metallurgy and rice cultivation from Korea to Japan. The subsequent Kofun culture contributed horsemanship and the idea of a centralized state, together with the imperial lineage, but there seems to be no reason to link it to any major linguistic expansion.

A crucial issue concerns the languages of the Three Kingdoms of protohistorical Korea. What we know is that there were at least two languages that are documented in historical sources. One of these languages clearly resembles Korean and is traditionally classified as "Old Korean", while the other resembles Japanese and is known by the misnomen "Old Koguryŏ". Although some scholars still see "Old Koguryŏ" as the missing link "proving" the genetic "relationship" between Korean and Japanese, the truth is, of course, that it was the last continental trace of Japanese (Japonic) and is therefore best labelled Para-Japanese (Para-Japonic). The question is where, exactly, it was spoken, and which route it took when it expanded to the Japanese Islands before it was extinguished in Korea by the historical expansion of the Korean language.

In this context, Unger polemicizes against Christopher I. Beckwith and Alexander Vovin, two of the foremost scholars who have been active in the field of Koreo-Japanese protohistorical language studies. According to Vovin, Korean (Koreanic) may originally have been spoken as far north as Koguryŏ, while Beckwith holds to the more traditional view that it spread mainly from Silla, with Koguryŏ being the principal realm of Para-Japanese. It happens that Beckwith and Vovin seem to agree on that Japanese originally reached Korea from continental China, probably from the Shandong Peninsula, though ultimately perhaps from the Yangtze basin, but their views differ on how, and from where exactly, Japanese found its way to the Japanese Islands. For some reason, neither Beckwith nor Vovin is willing to accept the idea that it could have been the third kingdom, Paekche, that played the crucial role in this process. Unfortunately, Unger also fails to recognize this possibility, which is why his ethnohistorical picture remains incomplete.

The problem with Unger's approach is that he takes the primary genetic "relationship" between Korean and Japanese as an axiom, which he only wishes to refine by identifying the layers of secondary contact. He does offer (in Chapter 2) a critique of the past excesses made in the use of the comparative method, but he nevertheless ends up quoting a list of "kernel etymologies", that is, shared items which, he thinks, can only be explained in a genetic framework. The material does contain real lexical parallels, but anyone who has worked on languages that *are* related can easily see that this is not the type of material one would use in support of genetic comparisons. Unger also considers structural parallels, focusing on the morphosyntax, but the evidence here is even more diffuse and less binding, since "Altaicization" is a process well-known from many languages, including even Mandarin Chinese.

When discussing the "convergence theories" (in Chapter 3) Unger continues the comparison between the views of Beckwith and Vovin concerning the "Old Koguryŏ" language and other relevant issues, a somewhat unnecessary and biased enterprise since there are also other positions that should have been reviewed. The main point here is that Vovin in a recent book (2010) is systematically rejecting the lexical "evidence" that has been proposed in favour of a Koreo-Japanese genetic "relationship", while Unger makes an effort to rehabilitate at least some parts of the traditional corpus, to which he also makes new additions. Only after all these preliminaries does Unger arrive at his actual task, the lexical contacts between Korean and Japanese (Chapter 4). The reader is somewhat disappointed to see that his list of "Japanese borrowings from Old Korean" comprises only 28 numbers. Even so, this is the most valuable part of the book, and the part that has real quality about it – which is not to say that all the etymologies in his list are necessarily correct.

The next question of the reader is, however, whether it would not be possible to identify also Japanese borrowings *in* Old Korean. Obviously, since Japanese (Pre-Proto-Japonic and, later, Para-Japonic) was widely spoken on the Korean Peninsula, it must have left its traces in the Korean language. We might even assume three types of language contact in different times: adstratal (at the time of the protohistorical tribal confederations), superstratal (when Paekche was culturally dominant over Silla), and substratal (when Silla absorbed the former Paekche territory). Clearly, many of the "cognates" in Unger's list of "kernel etymologies" are connected with this impact, which took place on the Korean Peninsula.

After presenting his data Unger reviews the chronological evidence provided by mythology (Chapter 5) and archaeology (Chapter 6). The most original part here is the discussion of the "volcano myths" in *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, which, according to Unger, contain references to geologically datable eruptions of actual

volcanoes. On rather diffuse grounds, Unger then claims that the mythological evidence allows the Old Korean borrowings in Japanese to be dated to the Kofun period. Although this dating may be correct, it would be too simplistic to assume that all the loanwords concerned were "brought" to Japan by Korean-speaking people. At least some of them, can well have been borrowed in Korea, from where they could have entered Japan via the networks that still existed between the speakers of Japanese (in Japan) and Para-Japanese (in Korea).

It is often difficult for linguists to accept the fact that our evidence from past languages involves so many lacunae. The protolanguages we can reconstruct represent only a small proportion of the languages that were extant at any given time. Traces of lost languages may, of course, survive in the languages extant today, but they are difficult or impossible to identify. In the case of Japan there must have been a particularly large number of languages (not only Ainu) that the early Japanese speakers met when they first entered the Japanese Islands. Due to trade links with Korea and other areas, there were also opportunities for other linguistic contacts, which must have yielded cultural vocabulary to Japanese. Similar external relations were, of course, even more abundant in the case of Korean. These issues are also discussed by Unger, though not in much detail (in Chapter 7), since the conclusion is obvious: very few credible etymologies can be constructed out of minimal evidence.

Unger's book demonstrates well the situation that the leaders in Koreo-Japanese studies today are international scholars based in Europe and the United States, but not in Korea or Japan. This is easy to understand as the issues that have to be dealt with are highly volatile in the context of the national historiographies of the two countries. It will take a long time before a Korean historian or linguist can openly admit that the one-time homeland of the Japanese language lies on the Korean Peninsula, and that Korea was not always the monolingual Korean entity it is today. On the other hand, the idea that Korea has played a crucial role in the origins of Japan is not easily digestible for the Japanese historian or linguist, who would rather emphasize the role of local innovation.

The problem is not made easier by the circumstance that Japan during its brief period of colonial rule over Korea (1910–1945) tried to explain all the historical connections between the two countries as having been initiated from the Japanese side. The claim was that Korea, or some parts of it, had been a Japanese "colony" already in protohistorical times. The reality is, of course, the opposite, since it was Japan that was colonized from Korea. Ever since the end of the isolation of the Jōmon period, there has been a constant flow of demographic, cultural, and linguistic influences from Korea to Japan, which means that, historically, Japan

has always been secondary to Korea. There is one important exception, however: Japan was the first to modernize, and it was exactly this discrepancy that became the root of the modern problems between the two countries.

There is also one important exception among the scholars with a background in the region: Wontack Hong. By principal profession an economist (now retired from Seoul National University), Hong is equally prolific as an author of historical surveys pertaining to the relations between Korea and Japan. Moreover, unlike most Western scholars working in the field, he makes the right emphasis in that he focuses on the role of Paekche in the formation of Japan. By no coincidence, he publishes his books from "Kudara International" (*Kudara* being the Japanese name of Paekche). His most important contribution to the field so far is the fresh two-volume set comprising one volume on the general history of East Asia and the other on the specific sphere of issues connected with the protohistorical relations between Korea and Japan:

> **Wontack Hong**, *East Asian History: A Tripolar Approach.* Seoul: Kudara International, 2010. 479 pp. ISBN 978-89-85567-05-3-03910 (paperback).
>
> **Wontack Hong**, *Ancient Korea-Japan Relations: Paekche and the Origin of the Yamato Dynasty.* Seoul: Kudara International, 2010. 297 pp. ISBN 978-89-85567-06-0-03910 (paperback).

These books deserve special recognition not only for their insightful approach but also for their elegant design, with high-quality colour pictures, maps, and extracts from primary sources integrated in the whole in a reader-friendly way. As far as the text is concerned, Hong is not afraid of disclosing what he sees as "distortions in East Asian History". By the "tripolar approach" he means that East Asia should not be viewed from the traditional Sinocentric perspective (= the monopolar approach), nor in a framework involving China and "the unified nomads in the steppe" (= the bipolar approach), but, rather, in terms of a system of interaction between three actors of equal weight, but with different roles: China (the southern sedentary cultures), Mongolia (the northwestern nomadic cultures), and Manchuria (the northeastern seminomadic and sedentary cultures). This is a holistic framework conceptualized by Gari Ledyard and Thomas Barfield (as well as by the present author), and as a model for understanding East Asian history it does not seem to have alternatives. Even so, much research is still being done on East Asia in the spirit of obsolete paradigms, which is why Hong's two books certainly serve a purpose as a healthy reminder of how things can also be seen.

The first of the two volumes is essentially a handbook of East Asian political and cultural history, chronologically arranged, and with a focus on Manchuria,

historiographically the most neglected component of the tripolar complex. Special attention is paid to the relations between continental Manchuria and Korea. The succession Yemaek-Chosŏn-Koguryŏ-Parhae is identified by Hong as "Macro-Tungusic", a not unreasonable identification in view of the fact that the historical Jurchen-Manchu may also be seen as parts of the same succession. Other ethnolinguistic continuities established by Hong include Sushen-Yilou-Mohe-Nüzhen (= 'Tungusic'), Puyŏ-Koguryŏ-Silla (= 'Korean'), and Puyŏ-Koguryŏ-Paekche (= ?). However, as may be seen, these are not always mutually consistent. Like many historians, Hong does not make a strict distinction between political formations, ethnic groups, and languages.

Incidentally, southeastern Manchuria has become an issue of modern diplomatic dispute between South Korea and China, since both countries include the Koguryŏ-Parhae succession in their national historiographies. As Hong notes, the controversy began already a thousand years ago, when the Parhae territory was divided between the Koryŏ kingdom based on the Korean Peninsula and the Liao-Jin empires based in Manchuria and northern China. Territorially, the actual heir of Koguryŏ-Parhae today is, of course, North Korea, and Hong raises the interesting possibility that the Chinese government "is trying to clear the ground to take over North Korea when it collapses, and absorb it, *à la* Tibet, into the great Chinese empire". It is exactly this kind of politically incorrect statements that make the reading of Hong's books so refreshing. It may be mentioned that, to counteract China's hidden goals, the South Korean government founded, in 2006, the "North East Asian History Foundation", which has "the goal of laying the basis for peace and prosperity in East Asia by resolving historical conflicts in the region".

According to Hong, the tripolar approach ceased to be valid with the fall of the Qing dynasty (1911). On this he may be wrong, however, for with the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905) the roles of Mongolia and Manchuria were taken over by Russia and Japan, respectively. The prewar Japanese expansion on the continent can very well be seen as Japan's attempt to play the role of the Manchurian component in the East Asian tripolar system. The "puppet state" of Manchukuo (1931–1945), which Hong calls a "Pseudo-Qing restauration", is a particularly difficult topic to deal with, and it will take time before an objective history of it can be written, especially since the postwar Western historiography is also seriously distorted concerning this detail. Another difficult area is formed by the Russo-Korean relationships. It seems that Korean historians (not to speak of politicians) have not realized that Russia is Korea's only natural friend in the region, and the only neighbouring country that does not profit from the continued division of Korea.

The second volume by Hong is more strictly focused on the protohistorical period, though it also has a modern political dimension. The principal objective of the book is to bring forth evidence in favour of the "Kudara-Yamato model", according to which the immediate origins of Yamato Japan were located in Paekche. The evidence itself is generally well known, extending from historical records to obvious cultural and archaeological parallels, but the problem is that the relevant facts have never been recognized by the Japanese national historiography. This forces Hong to criticize "the claustrophobic narrowness of the Japanese academic tradition" as a whole, a criticism that is certainly justified at least as far as the fields of archaeology and history are concerned. To support his analysis, Hong also refers to recent cases of outright fabrication, which have certainly not raised the reputation of Japanese archaeology.

It has to be said that Hong himself is also not completely free of nationalist pretensions. For instance, he is not willing to recognize the fact that Paekche, like Silla and Koguryŏ (in its later form), was founded in the fourth century and not before. Hong is also wrong when he claims that Western historians only "echo the contentions of Japanese scholars" on this point, for here Western historiography has no reason to take any other stand except one based on facts. On the other hand, Hong may well be right when he criticizes Japanese historians for not accepting the data suggesting the military presence of Paekche as far northwest as the Liaoxi region. In fact, this northern dimension of Paekche might explain why some Japonic-looking toponyms are registered from the Koguryŏ territory, a circumstance that has led Beckwith (and many others) to mislabel these toponyms as representing the "Old Koguryŏ" language.

Hong correctly refutes the Horse Rider theory of the late Egami Namio, according to whom the Japanese state was founded under the direct impact of the semi-mythical Puyŏ tribesmen based in central Manchuria, a sheer impossibility in view of the strength of the Koguryŏ kingdom immediately south of the Puyŏ. According to Hong, the hidden objective of the Horse Rider theory was to minimize the role of Korea as a source of Japanese cultural roots. It has to be noted, however, that the Puyŏ figure also in Korean historiography, and Hong himself derives influences from them not only to Koguryŏ, but also to Paekche and Silla. Although the Puyŏ-Koguryŏ-Paekche link is to some extent corroborated by historical sources, the significance of this link should not be exaggerated. In particular, the diffusion of cultural influences should not be understood as binding evidence of population movements or linguistic expansions.

In contrast to the diffuse role of Puyŏ and Koguryŏ, the role of Paekche in the early history of Japan is beyond any doubt. Not only was the Paekche territory the region from where the Yayoi culture spread to Japan, but also, the political

and military ties between Paekche and Yamato suggest an intimate partnership that is best explained by assuming an ethnic affinity. Hong must be right when he claims that "a member of the Paekche royal family – carried out the conquest of the Yamato region – in the late fourth century", thus laying the foundations of Japan as a political state. Much of Hong's book is devoted to the summarizing of the archaeological, historical, folkloric, and even onomastic evidence in favour of this claim. He also notes the inherent bias of the historical sources, for even *Samguk Sagi* was compiled in a spirit favourable to Silla and hostile towards Paekche. The information available on Kaya, the "fourth" kingdom in protohistorical Korea, may be even less reliable.

Unfortunately, being not a linguist, Hong gets lost when it comes to the linguistic correlations of the historical situation. In his formulation, "the basic structure of the proto-Japanese language" was provided by "the Kaya dialect of the Korean language", though "lexically – and phonologically – the influence of Ainu and Malayo-Polynesian languages could have been substantial". This is a claim that seems to follow the popular line of reasoning which explains Japanese as a "mixed" language. However, there is a more or less complete consensus among linguists today that there are no "mixed" languages. If Japanese had originally been based on a "dialect of the Korean language", the two languages would have to be close relatives, which they are not. Not even Unger, who believes in the original genetic affinity of Japanese and Korean, would think that the difference between the two languages was still at a dialectal level during the protohistorical period.

This shows the limitations of Hong's reasoning, for he, too, is unable to free himself from a nationalist line of historiography. Accepting the fact that Korean and Japanese represent two different linguistic lineages, not even related to each other, but that both of them were spoken in parallel on the Korean Peninsula in protohistorical times, possibly together with several other languages, is simply too much to digest for a Korean scholar. However, in spite of this forgivable flaw, which only time can repair, Hong's two books are, in general, much better argumented than anything presented by Japanese historians or even linguists during the recent decades. This is a good beginning on which a more profound understanding can be built concerning the early relationships of Korea and Japan, two nations that are historically more profoundly intertwined than either of them would like to admit.

It happens that the Koreo-Japanese historical relations are also the topic of a recent collective volume produced for the above-mentioned "Northeast Asian

History Foundation". This volume, containing 40 articles, is an abridged English version of a Korean original with as many as 98 articles in three volumes.

The Foreseen and the Unforeseen in Historical Relations Between Korea and Japan. Seoul: Northeast Asian History Foundation, 2009. 464 pp. ISBN 978-89-6187-140-2-03910 (paperback).

Compared with the professional and sophisticated approach of Hong Wontack, the authors of this volume are much more explicitly political, which, unfortunately, reduces the credibility of their message. Formally, their goal is to "bring an end to confrontational and negative historical views", but the volume fails to reach this end since it only presents the Korean point of view. This is understandable as all the contributors are native Koreans, but the critical reader cannot avoid the feeling of being underestimated. As always in the case of propaganda literature camouflaged as "historical truth", the volume has essentially a counterproductive effect.

Chronologically, this is a volume of broad coverage, for it deals with issues from protohistorical trade relations (Park Chunsoo) and the Shōsōin treasures (Yeon Minsu) up to modern history education (Chung Jaejeong). Some of the chapter titles are openly provocative, like "The Japanese imperialists' destruction of Korea's cultural heritage" (Lee Sangbae) and "Has compensation for the damage inflicted during Japan's colonial rule been completed?" (Chung Inseop). On the other hand, there are also pieces of critical research. For instance, the chapter on "The Gwanggaeto Stele inscription's real meaning" (Yeon Minsu) offers a useful survey of the controversies surrounding this most important document concerning the early ties of Japan and the kingdoms of Korea.

The time of the Japanese colonial rule is understandably still too recent in order to receive any kind of positive appreciation by Korean historians. In fact, the "crimes" committed by native Koreans during this period are still being investigated by the "Presidential Committee for the Inspection of Collaborations for Japanese Imperialism". Objectively speaking, however, the Japanese made also positive contributions, in that they very effectively built a modern infrastructure in Korea, though this infrastructure was subsequently destroyed in the Korean War. Interestingly, there is more positive to say of the older periods of Japanese military presence in Korea. The chapter on "The Japanese invasion of Korea in the 1592–1598 period and the exchange of culture and civilization between the two countries" (Ha Woobong) suggests, among other things, that the red pepper, which today is such an essential component of Korean food, reached Korea via Japan, which had received it from the Portuguese sailors and tradesmen arriving from Central America.

The role of Korea as a transmitter of cultural influences to Japan is, of course, a less controversial topic for Korean historians. What Korean historians cannot, however, recognize for the time being is that the people in Korea who most intensively interacted with Japan in protohistorical times, spoke "Japanese", that is, that their native language was more or less identical, or in any case intelligible, with the language that had been transferred from Korea to Japan by the Yayoi migration. The problem is that since this language was not Korean, its speakers cannot be identified as "Koreans" in the linguistic sense, although their descendants today speak Korean. This is why all talk of the "Korean roots of Japan" is a double-edged sword, which Korean historians should handle with care.

It has to be noted at this point that Korean scholars have long ago proposed a more "cautious" approach to the language issue. In their view, the languages of protohistorical Korea may simply be identified by the names of the Three Kingdoms, yielding "the Silla language", "the Paekche language", and "the Koguryŏ language", as well as, possibly, "the Kaya language". Unfortunately, this is only play with words, since the "cautious" terminology does not remove the issue of linguistic affinities. There is by now commanding evidence on that "the Paekche (or Paekche-Kaya) language" was genetically Japonic (Para-Japonic), while Korean, which is most credibly identified with the "Silla language", is not Japonic but Koreanic. Therefore, irrespective of what terms are used, the fact remains that there were at least two separate languages in protohistorical Korea, only one of which was connected with Japanese.

Of more immediate importance today is the territorial issue between Korea and Japan, which concerns the "islands" of Dokdo, as discussed in the chapter "Dokdo is South Korean territory" (Lee Hoon). The disputed territory, also known as the Liancourt Rocks, consists of only two minute islets and less than 40 uninhabitable rocks, located at a roughly equal distance from Korea and Japan. The historical arguments are weak on both sides, which is why the ownership of the "islands" can only be determined by military means. In the current situation South Korea, which on this issue is supported by North Korea, is militarily more confident and keeps the "islands" safely under its protection. Since an open conflict with Japan is unlikely, this may remain the *status quo* for a long time to come.

The "islands" of Dokdo are also the topic of a separate small volume issued by the "Northeast Asian History Foundation" and authored by Kim Byungryull, a graduate of Korea Military Academy and a professor at Korea National Defense University:

Kim Byungryull, *The History of Imperial Japan's Seizure of Dokdo*. Seoul: Northeast Asian History Foundation, 2008. 199 pp. ISBN 978-89-6187-066-5-93910 (paperback).

The "not for sale" label at the end of the book suggests that this is a volume ordered by the Korean government for the purpose of giving international publicity to the Korean view concerning the issue of Dokdo. It turns out that Dokdo here symbolizes the Koreo-Japanese historical and territorial relationships, as a whole, for the greater part of the book deals with more general issues, including "the rise of militarism in Japan" (Chapter 1), "the Russo-Japanese War" (Chapter 3), and "Japan's annexation of Korea" (Chapter 8).

There is no question that Japan's presence in Korea involved a gross violation of not only Korea's sovereignty as an independent state, but also of the international "laws" of the time. On the other hand, Japan's actions may be seen as justifiable in the context of the colonial period, and as a regional reaction to the activities of the Western powers and Russia in China and Manchuria in a situation where neither the Manchu empire nor Korea were able to defend themselves. More concretely, there were only two options available for Korea: to be conquered by either Russia or Japan. Russia might have been a more favourable alternative in the long run, but the war decided the matter in favour of Japan.

Against this background, the "Japanese Navy's seizing of Dokdo" (Chapter 5) was a minor event directly necessitated by Japan's more large-scale military operations in the region. Shortly before the "seizure", the "islands" seem to have been used as a base by a Japanese sea-lion hunter, but otherwise neither Korea nor Japan can demonstrate any credible historical property right to them. However, with the Russo-Japanese War Japan became the undisputed master of the Sea of Japan, which is why it was only natural that the Liancourt Rocks also came under direct Japanese control. It was equally natural that after World War II, when the Japanese control of the Sea of Japan ended, the "islands" were occupied by Korea. In cases like this, any attempts to justify the modern situation by artificial historical evidence are doomed to be unsuccessful.

Retrospectively, of course, Japan's leadership made a serious mistake in entering Korea and continental Manchuria. Japan often profiles itself as an "island state" (*shimaguni*), and it would have done wisely had it retained this profile throughout its modernization period. After the annexation of Hokkaido (1870), the Kurile Islands (1875), the Ryukyu Islands (1879), Formosa (1895), and South Sakhalin (1905), Japan would have effectively controlled the entire West Pacific belt, most of which it lost due to its poorly managed military involvement beyond its natural sphere and capacity.

Dokdo (*Takeshima*), is only one of the island disputes in which the weak postwar Japan is involved. In the south, Japan faces the anger of China and Taiwan about the Diaoyu (*Senkaku*) Islands, while in the north it continues to claim the so-called "Four Islands" in the Southern and Lesser Kuriles that were occupied by the Soviet Union in the aftermath of World War II. This is, without a doubt, Japan's most important territorial dispute, and one that until the present day has prevented the signing of a peace treaty with Russia. There exists a huge literature on the "Four Islands", also known as the "Northern Territories". Among the more curious contributions to the field is a volume in which parallels are drawn with the Åland Islands:

> **Kimie Hara** & **Geoffrey Jukes** (eds), *Northern Territories, Asia-Pacific Regional Conflict and the Åland Experience: Untying the Kurillian Knot.* Routledge Studies in Asia's Transformations. London: Routledge, 2009. xxiii + 145 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-48409-1 (hardcover).

The volume is introduced by the editors as being "the fruit of an international collaborative study, which considers the Åland Islands settlement in northern Europe as a resolution model for the major Asia-Pacific regional conflicts that derived from the post-World War II disposition of Japan, with particular focus on the territorial dispute between Japan and Russia". This formulation immediately reveals for the reader that neither the editors nor the authors can be particularly well informed about the situation, for, in reality, the Åland case has absolutely no similarity with the Northern Territories dispute, except that both cases involve islands.

Of the eleven contributors to the volume, one is a native Ålander (Elisabeth Nauclér), one a Finn (Markku Heiskanen), and one an Armenian-Russian based in Japan (Konstantin Sarkisov), while the rest are either Japanese or Anglo-Saxons from various countries. Only one contributor, Hiroshi Kimura (from Hokkaido University) has any kind of previous experience of research on the Kurile Islands. Incidentally, the misspelling "Kurillian" for *Kurilian* derives from Kimura's recent English-language book (2008) on the same subject. The fact that the editors have accepted this – originally accidental – misspelling at face value is probably indicative of their depth of expertise on the issue. None of the authors, with the possible exception of Kimura himself, seems to be familiar with the authoritative history of the Kurile Islands by John J. Stephan (1974).

The inspiration for "solving" the Kurile issue with the "Åland model" comes from the historical fact that the Åland Islands were "given" to Finland (1921) by the League of Nations, against the competing claim by Sweden and, most

importantly, against the free will of the Swedish-speaking native population of Åland, which had voted in favour of a union with Sweden. Finland considered the outcome as a diplomatic victory, but this victory came with the requirement that Åland should be administered as a demilitarized autonomous region with extensive political and linguistic rights. The autonomy requirement was against the original plans of the young Finnish republic, but this was the price that had to be paid for the territorial gain. In retrospection, it may be said that the decision was not unfavourable for Åland, which is today closer to independence than it ever could have been under Sweden. On the other hand, the "Åland model" was designed to "save" only Åland, and it was never applied to the other areas in Finland that also had a predominantly Swedish-speaking population.

On the Kurile Islands, however, there is no native population, since the last Kurile Ainu, who were the true natives of the region, were relocated and effectively exterminated by the Japanese soon after the acquisition of the islands by Japan. The "native" population that existed on the Southern and Lesser Kuriles at the end of World War II was, therefore, Japanese, and represented very recent colonists with no historical ties or "rights" to the islands. The same is, of course, true of the mixed Russian population that today lives on the Kuriles. Even if the islands were "given" to the one or the other part by an international decision, which itself is unlikely, the essential principle of the "Åland model" would be impossible to follow in this case.

Even so, the obvious intention of the volume is to support the Japanese case in the dispute against Russia. This is most clearly stated by Kimura, who proposes (p. 36) that, in the ideal solution, "Japan is granted sovereignty over the Northern Territories" at the same time as it "is placed under obligation to guarantee the Russian inhabitants' preservation of their language, culture, and customs". This statement exhibits a fundamental misunderstanding of the situation, for it is not the "rights" of the current Russian population on the Kuriles that are the problem, but the issue of territorial ownership with all the economic and military implications it has.

Of course, if forced to vote about their status, the present-day Russian inhabitants on the Kuriles would choose Russia, just as the Ålanders chose Sweden, but the rest is different: while the League of Nations was able to persuade Sweden to give up its claim to the Åland Islands, which it did not possess, there is no international organization that could today force Russia to give up the Kurile Islands, which it already possesses. The last possibility of changing the territorial borders of Russia was during the confusion following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Japan did not use this opportunity, which is why the result will be the

same as in the Dokdo dispute: the *status quo* will prevail irrespective of whether Japan likes it or not.

John J. Stephan concludes his review of this same volume (in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 69/2010) by pointing out that, in spite of the formal dispute, the postwar situation involves "a long interim of peaceful, stable frontiers" between Russia and Japan. He also notes the "abnormality" of this situation against the historical background of constant Russo-Japanese conflicts. The same can be said of East Asia, as a whole. For the moment, the Sino-Russian relations seem to be stable, but a lot of unreleased pressure has accumulated not only at the Russo-Japanese border, but also at the Sino-Mongolian and Sino-Korean borders, not to speak of the internal tensions within China (including Taiwan and Tibet) and Korea. One has the feeling that something will happen, sooner or later.