

Research Article

# Review on the Relationship Between Mahan and Baekje: The Same Entities with Different Names

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## Abstract

Currently, in Northeast Asia, where Korea, China, and Japan are located, there is still a fierce debate over the extent of the territories in ancient history. This research aimed to prove that Mahan and Baekje, ancient Korean states, were essentially the same entity only with different names employing new methodologies including comparative analysis of ancient Historical records from Korea, China and Japan, analysis of clans and place names, as well as examination of various inscriptions, stele texts, and genealogical data. The research results revealed that Baekje, referred to as Dongyi tribes in China and as Gudara in Japan was confirmed to be another name of Mahan. Baekje was established as a tributary of Mahan in the ancient land of Daebang and Mahan and Baekje coexisted peacefully for over 460 years, and they even engaged in a division of roles in diplomatic activities. In Tang Dynasty, when Baekje was conquered, King Kim Chun-chu of Silla was appointed as the general secretary of the Yuyi Clan Conquest. The titles of Yuyi and Mahan also appear in the positions of Su Dingfang, which refers to the Mahan forces that existed around the Yeongsan River basin as Yue Zhi. All these facts confirm that Mahan and Baekje were indeed the same entities, merely known by different names in historical Records. The aforementioned research results demonstrate that Mahan-Baekje was a very Powerful political entity spanning the Korean Peninsula, the northeastern region of China, and the Japanese Archipelago. This serves as strong evidence against the claims of China's Northeast Project and Japan's theory of the Imna Japan Province, highlighting the historical inaccuracies in these assertions.

## Keywords

Mahan-Baekje, Dongyi, The Same Entities with Different Names, Lai-Yi Mahan, Gutae Baekje, Yuyi, Yue Zhi

## 1. Introduction: Mahan and Baekje Were One Entity

When one studies Mahan, it isn't long before they are engulfed in a significant question. Mahan, a nation that emerged in the 3rd century with a territory twice the size of Goguryeo's, eventually disappeared from historical records. HTK: History of the Three Kingdoms [1] states that Mahan was conquered by King Onjo in 9 AD. However, Chinese records like RTK: Records of the Three Kingdoms [2] and

BLH: Book of the Later Han [3] mention Mahan in the 3rd century as the largest domain among the Dongyi nations. Therefore, it seems that HTK understated the records of Mahan and replaced them with those of Baekje.

Mahan is depicted as a country representing Han (Ancient Korea) until the end of the 3rd century when Western Jin was survived, actively engaging in diplomatic activities. Then,

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almost like a tale, records of Mahan disappear from Chinese historical texts from the Eastern Jin period onwards. HRJ: History Records of Japan [4] does not mention Mahan at all. In the Wa (Ancient Japan) biography of Book of Song [5], there is only a reference to Mohan as one of the lands claimed by the five Wa kings of Baekje descent who migrated to the archipelago. In HRJ, there is no mention of the term 'Mohan,' and everything is referred to as Baekje. Even Baekje is described as 'Kudara,' meaning a very large country, with no mention of Mahan whatsoever.

As a result, the southwestern region of the Korean Peninsula remains a blank space in historical records, leading to the emergence of fictional claims in colonial historiography, such as the theory of Baekje's annexation of Mahan and Japan's theory of the Imna Japan Province. Conscientious historians, facing a scarcity of documentary evidence, counter these claims based on archaeological findings. Especially, the existence of the Mahan forces, represented by the Ongwan tomb culture, has been confirmed to have persisted at least until the early to mid-6th century through archaeological excavations. However, even this is seen as grossly insufficient for analyzing the history of Mahan. In my view, archaeological research has been too reactive and defensive, mainly due to the near absence of documentary historiography.

However, after comprehensively examining records from China and the Korean place names, clans, the relationship between Mahan and the archipelago, and various records from the period of Baekje's fall, I have concluded that Baekje was another name for Mahan. In other words, Mahan did not disappear; it merely changed its name to Baekje for its external affairs. When the Tang dynasty set out to conquer Baekje, they appointed Silla's Kim Chun-chu as the Commander-in-Chief of the Campaign against the Yuyi Tribe. The title of Su Dingfang also included the terms 'Yuyi' and 'Mahan.' Yuyi, also known as 'Yue Zhi,' refers to the Mahan forces centered around the Yeongsan River basin. Why would they use the term referring to the Yeongsan River forces while setting out to conquer Baekje?

In resolving these doubts by examining various materials, an astonishing fact was confirmed: Mahan and Baekje were essentially the same entity, differing only in name. We have conventionally accepted as fact that Mahan and Baekje were separate entities and naturally assumed that Baekje conquered or merged with Mahan. This is because in major historical texts like HRJ, where Mahan's activities would have been most prominent, there is little mention of Mahan; instead, it's unified under Baekje. As a result, Mahan's existence became merely an inconvenient presence, and the focus shifted to when Baekje conquered Mahan. Until recently, I too conducted my research under the assumption that Mahan and Baekje were separate entities.

However, upon a comprehensive review of various facts, including records from China, the place names and clans of the Three Hans, and the relationship between Mahan and the

archipelago, it has been revealed that Baekje was a new name for a country founded by Mahan.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Mahan and Baekje refer to the same nation, differing only in name. Here, the fact that Mahan and Baekje are the same entity with different names will be demonstrated through an analysis of various materials.

## 2. The 460-Year Peaceful Coexistence of Mahan and Baekje

The most critical evidence that Mahan and Baekje were the same entity is the fact that they coexisted peacefully for over 460 years. Here, Baekje refers to Gutae Baekje. King Gutae of Buyeo founded Baekje either in the ancient land of Daebang or in the ancient land of Mahan (Yoon Yong-goo, 2018) [6]. The founding period is analyzed to be between 196~204 AD, during the life of Gongsun Du of the late Han dynasty. Subsequently, Baekje absorbed HS: Hanseong Shipje (ten tribes), evolving from a small Baekje to a large Baekje.

Mahan was founded around the end of the 3rd century BC, following Jin Gae's invasion of Joseon, centered around the Shandong and North China region. This is precisely what is referred to as Lai-Yi Mahan. Baekje was a nation that belonged to Lai-Yi Mahan. Yangjikkongdo [7] states, "Baekje was formerly a part of Lai-Yi Mahan." Strictly speaking, although the Gutae force of Buyeo is also part of the Lai-Yi tribe, it can be understood that Mahan, with its 55 nations, was founded primarily by the Lai-Yi tribe of the Korea and Shandong Peninsula.

Baekje appears to have established Liaoxi Baekje during the early 4th century, a time of Goguryeo's expansion and the Sixteen Kingdoms period in China (304~439 AD). Prior to this, the Baekje forces are analyzed to have moved to Gongju in South Chungcheong Province, which was under the control of the Mahan Yue Zhi forces. From then until the fall of Baekje, Mahan and Baekje coexisted without conflict. Baekje was located in Ungjin and could not have sustained itself without the support and backing of Mahan. Geographically, since Ungjin or Gongju, has almost no plains, support from the Mahan forces in the Honam region, including Iksan, was essential for maintaining military forces. Therefore, Ungjin Baekje was initially the same political entity as Mahan.

In 296 BC, during the attack on the Dongho, or the Liaodong forces of Joseon, by Jin Gae of Yan, it is analyzed that the Bal forces of Joseon were divided into three main groups. First, there was a group that moved northeast and founded

<sup>1</sup> This research, addressing the significant scarcity of materials related to Mahan in the Yeongsan River region, meticulously examined not only the historical records from Korean and Chinese annals but also the details of clans and place names. In both Korea and China, clans and place names are inseparably linked. By employing a new methodology focused on the movement and interaction of clans, it became possible to analyze the true nature of Mahan and Baekje more precisely.

Buyeo. These were the Gutae forces. Second, pushed back by Jin Gae's assault and retreating a thousand li,<sup>2</sup> there existed Han Joseon, centered around the Changryeo region east of the Luan River. Han Joseon later lost its territory to Wiman during the reign of King Jun. Lastly, the main force of the Bal forces, centered around naval power, established Lai-Yi Mahan around the Yang Gok region of Shandong, then took control of the areas of Buyeo and Gongju Korea, and moved to the Byeonsan Peninsula and the Yeongsan River basin, establishing the Yue Zhi country in Balla (Naju Bannam). Later, these forces reunified in Liaodong, leading to the founding of Gutae Baekje.

Woongjin Baekje and Mahan coexisted for about 460 years from the founding of Baekje until its fall, with almost no major conflicts. This would be impossible in the case of any other country. If they were separate entities, they would have engaged in dozens of wars. Moreover, as Shin Chae-ho (1998: 289) [8] cited, Baekje was even more belligerent than Goguryeo or Silla. Yet, there are no records of conflicts between Baekje and Mahan. The only and last instance of conflict between Baekje and Mahan seems to be when King Dongseong traveled to Mujinju (The current Gwangju). King Dongseong expressed dissatisfaction against the Mahan Jin royal family located in Naju and eventually was assassinated by his chief bodyguard, Baekga.

The era of King Dongseong is understood as a time when the issue of integrating Mahan and Baekje, specifically the problem of centralizing power to the center, emerged as a significant issue. King Dongseong, a king of the Mo<sup>3</sup> lineage, bestowed royal titles to various clans in the Honam region following victory in the war against the Northern Wei, and it appears that he granted Chinese-style governor titles to the mainland Baekje forces in China. Although King Dongseong made his utmost efforts for the revival of Baekje, it is analyzed that he did not receive adequate support from the Mahan Jin royal family in Naju, as he was not of the Buyeo lineage.

And he was essentially killed by his own bodyguard, who was almost like a double of himself. There are claims that Baekga assassinated the king due to being demoted and harboring resentment, but it is analyzed that King Dongseong, who was resolute in moving the capital to Buyeo, had no reason to neglect Baekga. Nevertheless, the reason Baekga had no choice but to assassinate the king was because the Buyeo clan forces, that is, the Yue Zhi forces, had been accumulating justification to seize control of the central Baekje royal family.

After the assassination of King Dongseong, Baekje entered a new era of the Buyeo lineage with the ascension of King Muryeong. He was, in fact, the mastermind behind Baekga's assassination of King Dongseong. Behind King Muryeong were the forces of the Mahan Jin royal family. Subsequently, King Muryeong pioneered the 22 Tamna Ad-

ministrative Regions and is shown to have restored the power dynamics with Goguryeo.

### 3. “Baekje Belonging to Mahan” as Recorded in Chinese Historical Texts

Among various Chinese historical texts, the first to depict the relationship between Mahan and Baekje is RTK. The text lists 55 countries belonging to Mahan, mentioning Baekje as the eighth. In several Chinese historical texts, Baekje is described as being founded by Buyeo King Gutae from the ancient land of Daebang which was located around current Tianjin City, China. Since Gutae founded Baekje between the end of the 2nd century and the beginning of the 3rd century, the Baekje mentioned in RTK, compiled around the late 3rd century (280-290 AD), can be said to refer to Gutae Baekje. In other words, Gutae Baekje was founded as one of the countries belonging to Mahan.

In RTK, it is recorded that “[Among the countries of Mahan are] Won Yang-guk, Mo Su-guk, Sang Wae-guk, So Seok Saek-guk, Dae Seok Saek-guk, Woo Hoo Mo Tak-guk, Shin Bun Go-guk, Baekje-guk... etc., totaling over fifty countries.”

BLH bases its records on RTK stating that the Mahan Empire comprised 54 countries, among which Baekje was specifically mentioned. This is because, by the early to mid-5th century when BLH was compiled, Baekje was already actively engaging in exchanges with the Mainland China.

“Mahan is located in the west, with 54 countries, bordering Nakrang to the north and Wa to the south. Jinhan is in the east, with 12 countries, bordering Yemaek to the north. Byeonjin is to the south of Jinhan, also comprising 12 countries, bordering Wa to the south. In total, there are 78 countries, and Baekje is one of them.”

The records in RTK and BLH clearly show that Baekje was founded as one of the states within the Mahan Empire. In other words, Gutae Baekje was established under the support of Mahan, south of Nakrang, in the ancient land of Daebang.

Next, BOL: Book of the Liang [9] also records that Baekje was one of the 54 countries of Mahan. According to BOL, in its early years, Baekje was located east of Liaodong, along with Goguryeo. When Goguryeo annexed Liaodong, Baekje occupied Liaoxi and Jinpyeong, establishing the Baekje County there. Gutae Baekje was originally founded in the ancient land of Daebang, south of Nakrang near Beijing, and then occupied two counties, Liaoxi and Jinpyeong, following the chaos in the mainland China.

“Baekje's origin lies in the Three Han countries of the Dongyi, one of which was Mahan, another was Jinhan, and the third was Byeonhan. Byeonhan and Jinhan each had 12 countries, while Mahan had 54. The larger countries had populations of over 10,000 families, and the smaller ones several thousand, totaling over 100,000 families, with Baekje being one of these countries. Later, it grew stronger and

<sup>2</sup> Generally, 1 li is approximately 400 meters.

<sup>3</sup> Mo represents the sound of a cow's moo.

merged several smaller countries. Originally, the country was located east of Liaodong, alongside Goguryeo. During the Jin Dynasty, when Goguryeo had already annexed Liaodong, Baekje also occupied the lands of the two counties Liaoxi and Jinpyeong, establishing itself as Baekje County.”

The earliest record of Baekje establishing counties in Liaoxi and Jinpyeong is found in Book of Song. The period recorded in Book of Song and others is after the era when Goguryeo's King Micheon conquered Nakrang and Daebang counties, a time identified as after the fall of Western Jin and the establishment of Eastern Jin. The internecine conflict within the Sama family of Western Jin, known as the War of the Eight Princes (300 AD), followed by the Yongjia Rebellion (307-312 AD), in which northern tribes attacked Luoyang, led to the rapid collapse of Western Jin. Among the numerous northern tribes who had moved into the North China after the Han Dynasty and lived alongside the Han people, the Xiongnu chieftain Liu Yuan in the Shanxi region declared himself as the 'King of Han.' Liu Yuan's son, Liu Cong, captured Luoyang in 311 AD and by killing over 30,000 officials and civilians, brought about the demise of the Western Jin dynasty in 316 AD. This event marked the beginning of the era of the Sixteen Kingdoms in the North region in China.

During this period, records of Baekje and Buyeo's military activities in the North China appear in the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government [10] and Book of Jin [11]. In the Book of Jin, in the record of Murong Huang, it is noted that in 345 AD, “people from Goguryeo, Baekje, the Yuwen tribe, and the Duan tribe were all forcibly brought by war,” and thus they should be relocated from the crowded capital to various cities in the west. Additionally, in the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government, under the record of Jin Qi 19, in the second year of Emperor Mu's reign (346 AD), there is a similar account.

“Initially, Buyeo was located in Noksan, but it was weakened and scattered due to invasions by Baekje. The people later moved close to Yan, but failed to establish adequate defenses. Consequently, Yan's King Murong Huang sent Crown Prince Murong Jun with three generals, Murong Gun, Murong Gak, and Moyeo Geun, leading 17,000 cavalymen to conquer Buyeo... Ultimately, they annihilated Buyeo, capturing its king, Hyun, and about 50,000 tribal people as prisoners, and returned in triumph.”

It is said that Buyeo and Baekje clashed in the Noksan area. There have been arguments suggesting that the historical records are incorrect, and that Baekje in these accounts was a misrecording of Goguryeo. However, in my view, the possibility of conflict between Buyeo and Baekje existed, as there were factions within Buyeo that refused to join Baekje. This is because, despite King Gutae from Buyeo founding Baekje, a country belonging to Mahan, remnants of Buyeo forces still existed. Eventually, these Buyeo forces, believing Yan would protect them and failing to prepare defenses, were annihilated by the Murong clan. Murong clan was turned out to be the

descendent of the Lai-Yi Mahan.

Records also mention activities of Buyeo forces with the Yeo or Seo surnames. In Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government, Jin Qi 24, in the fifth year of Emperor Taihua of Hae Seogong (370 AD), there is a record, which also appears in the “Book of Jin” in the record of Murong Huang. The only difference is the alternate spelling of Yeo Ul as Seo Ul.

“Bu Gyeon ordered Deng Gang to attack Shindo region. On the day of Jeongchuk, Murong Huan led 5,000 Xianbei people and fled to Yongseong. On the day of Muin, Yan's Sanggisi Lang Yeo Ul led about 500 hostages from Buyeo, Goguryeo, and Sangdang and opened the north gate of Ye at night, calling in Qin's soldiers. As a result, Yan's main army under Murong Wei, Sangyong King Murong Pyeong, Nakan King Murong Jang, Jeongyang King Murong Yeon, Self-Defence General Maeng Go, and Front Middle General Ae Rang all fled to Yongseong.”

The Book of Jin in the section on Murong Shu records that Seo Am started a rebellion. The Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government also presents the same content, but with Seo changed to Yeo, rendering it as Yeo Am. It is analyzed that at that time in China, Yeo and Seo were considered interchangeable.

“(In 385 AD) General Jianjie, Seo Am, started a rebellion in Mueup. He captured about 4,000 people in Mueup and fled north to Youzhou. Murong Shu instructed his subordinate general, Pyeong Gyu, to “hold firmly and not engage in battle, but wait until he arrived.” However, Pyeong Gyu disobeyed the order and engaged in battle, ultimately being defeated by Seo Am. Victorious, Seo Am entered Ji and captured about a thousand households, attacking everywhere he went and soon established a base in Yeongji, Liaoxi (around current Beijing).

Like this, Baekje and Buyeo had their bases in the Liaoxi region. Related to this, Kang Jong-hoon (2015)[12], Jung Jae-yoon (2018)[13], and others argue that the Baekje and Buyeo powers were actually based in this area. The problem is that the moment we link Baekje with HS, everything becomes futile. This is because the Baekje that was in the Liaoxi region was not HS, but the Mahan forces that transformed into Baekje.

The mention of Baekje's Liaoxi county in Book of Song records the actual activities of the Baekje forces. Particularly noteworthy in the records of BOL is the establishment of the Baekje county. This means that Liaoxi and Jinpyeong were not merely temporarily occupied but were incorporated into the territory of Baekje. Since Gutae Baekje was originally established on the continent, controlling Liaoxi and Jinpyeong on the continent is not surprising.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Most existing studies related to Baekje typically place Baekje in the Han River basin and generally deny the existence of a continental Baekje. However, various Chinese historical records indicate that Baekje was founded in the ancient land of Daebang, pioneered by the Gongsun family of the Central Plains. Therefore, the establishment of Baekje's county in Liaoxi by Gutae Baekje does not need a complicated explanation since it was not an expansion from the Han River basin

The records in BOL are considered to represent Baekje's perspective, given the frequent visits of Baekje envoys at that time. Additionally, according to various Chinese historical records, the main force of Gutae Baekje established a base in the Korean Peninsula after its founding, not in the Han River basin,<sup>5</sup> but in the Geum River basin, specifically in the area of Goma Fortress or Gongju Gong Mountain Fortress.

Baekje Nation's Envoy Section in the Yangjigongdo, a pictorial record of envoys sent to the Liang Dynasty around 526-536 AD, reveals more clearly the relationship between Baekje and Mahan. It indicates that Baekje was a country belonging to Lai-Yi Mahan. Here, Lai-Yi refers to the Lai-Yi tribes in the region from Shandong to Hebei Province, demonstrating that Mahan was established mainly by these Lai-Yi tribes who were merged with the Yuyi tribes to form the core of the Korean ethnic group. In the Mahan Empire, there are more than ten countries representing clans from Shandong Province. In particular, the power of the Yue Zhi Nation, the seat of Mahan, is of the same clan as the Yuyi who lived in the Shandong Area. Therefore, Baekje was initially founded in the ancient land of Daebang of the mainland China and, under the patronage of Mahan, controlled the Liaoxi region.

"Baekje was a country belonging to the old Lai-Yi Mahan. In the late Jin Dynasty, when Goguryeo had earlier strategized Liaodong and Nakrang, Baekje also occupied Liaoxi and Jinpyeong County. Since the Jin Dynasty, Baekje had always paid tribute through diplomatic exchanges...Baekje called its capital Goma and its towns Tamna, which is similar to the counties and districts in China. There were 22 Tamna Administrative Regions, all governed by divided sons and royal relatives. Surrounding minor countries like Banpa, Tak, Dara, Jeonna, Silla, Jimi, Mayeon, Sanggimun, Hachimra, etc., were all under its jurisdiction."

In Book of Zhou [14], it is expressed that Baekje's ancestors were a vassal state of Mahan. Gutae Baekje was founded as a country belonging to Mahan. Therefore, it can be understood that the lineage of Onjo's HS, which was established separately on the land borrowed from Mahan, is different. In Book of Zhou, Baekje's territory is interpreted to include only the Korean area from Asan Bay to Haenam.

"Baekje was generally a vassal state of Mahan and seems to be a branch of Buyeo. A person named Gutae first established a country in Daebang, whose borders reached Silla in the east and adjoined Goguryeo in the north, while the west and south were bounded by the great sea. The east-west length is 450 li and the north-south is about 900 li. The capi-

tal is Gomaseong."

In History of the Southern Dynasties [15], it records similar content to that of BOL, suggesting that during the Jin Dynasty, Baekje established the Baekje counties in the lands of the two counties of Liaoxi and Jinpyeong, effectively making them its territory.

"Baekje originated from the three Han states of the Dongyi people, one of which was Mahan, another Jinhan, and the other Byeonhan. Byeonhan and Jinhan each had 12 states, while Mahan had 54 states. The larger states had around 10,000 households, and the smaller ones a few thousand, totaling over 100,000 households, among which Baekje was one. Later, it gradually became stronger and annexed several smaller states. Originally, the country was located about a thousand li east of Liaodong with Goguryeo. During the Jin Dynasty, as Goguryeo had already strategized Liaodong, Baekje also occupied the land of the two counties of Liaoxi and Jinpyeong and established itself as the Baekje counties."

History of the Northern Dynasties [16] records the lineage of Baekje based on the premise that it originated from Buyeo, tracing its ancestry back to the distant ancestor, King Dongmyeong of Buyeo. It states that the ancestors of Baekje were of the same tribe as Mahan and originated from the Seokri Country, where King Dongmyeong fled. Subsequently, Dongmyeong founded the state of Buyeo. Later, a descendant of Buyeo's King, Gutae, established Baekje in the Daebang region. At that time, Baekje was one of the empires within Mahan. It is further elaborated that the name Baekje came from the fact that the hundred families crossed the sea. This clearly indicates that HS cannot be called Baekje. The capital of Baekje was referred to as Geobalseong or Gomaseong, suggesting that there were two capitals.

"Baekje's ancestors were generally of the Mahan tribe and originated from Seokri Country... Among the descendants of Dongmyeong, there was Gutae, who was very virtuous and faithful. He first established a country in the ancient land of Daebang. Gongsun Du, the Governor of Liaodong under the Han Dynasty, gave his daughter in marriage to Gutae, and Baekje eventually became a powerful nation among the Dongyi tribes. The country was named Baekje because it was said that a hundred families had crossed over to it. The country is bordered by Silla to the east and Goguryeo to the north. To the southwest, it is bounded by the great sea, located south of the small sea. The east-west distance is 450 li, and the north-south distance is about 900 li. Its capital city is called Geobalseong or Gomaseong."

In Book of Sui [17], the lineage of Baekje is traced back to King Dongmyeong, based on the premise that Baekje originated from Buyeo. This leads to a unique interpretation that Baekje's ancestry started from Dongmyeong, thus suggesting an origin from Goguryeo. This seems to be a confusion between Buyeo's Dongmyeong and Goguryeo's King Jumong (Dongmyeong). It is said that Baekje was named so because the hundred families crossed the sea. However, the statement

to the continent but a control over adjacent continental areas.

5 The Han River, flowing from the high mountainous upstream areas at a very fast pace, did not allow the formation of extensive plains in its lower course. The riverbed is too deeply carved, making it impossible to create irrigation channels for water diversion. In contrast, the Yeongsan River, with numerous tributaries having riverbeds nearly at the same height as the plains, experienced annual flooding during summer. This made it easy to retain water for rice farming, leading to the formation of vast plains. In the mudflats, abundant fish thrived, attracting numerous bird species. The Yeongsan River region had all the necessary conditions for an ancient civilization to flourish.

that the hundred families crossed the sea implies that all the surnames of the Dongyi tribes crossed the sea. Therefore, for Baekje to have controlled such an extensive area on the continent, it would have been necessary for the continental Mahan forces, who were indigenous to the area, to have united with Baekje as one force.

“The ancestors of Baekje came from Goguryeo... Among the descendants of Dongmyeong, there was a person named Gutae, who was very virtuous and faithful. He first established a country on the ancient land of Daebang. Gongsun Du, the Governor of Liaodong under the Han Dynasty, gave his daughter in marriage to him, and the country gradually prospered, becoming a powerful nation among the Dongyi tribes. Initially, it was named Baekje because it was said that a hundred families had crossed the sea.”

Old Book of Tang [18] records that Baekje was founded on the ancient land of Mahan, implying that the area of Dabang, where Baekje was established, was originally part of Mahan's territory. Baekje was located 6,200 li from Changan, and this distance is not a straight line by land, so it is much farther than the distance by sea routes. The term “the great sea” refers to the Yellow Sea, while “the small sea” likely refers to the Yellow River or the Yangtze River. In the ancient China, rivers like the Yangtze, Yellow River, Huai River, and Jie River were all referred to as seas, with the real sea being called “the great sea.” Therefore, being 6,200 li away from Changan and north of the great sea suggests the Liaoxi region, Shandong Peninsula, and the Korean Peninsula. To the west, across the sea and south of the small sea, Yuezhou refers to areas like Shaoxing in Zhejiang Province, Guangdong, Guangxi, and Yunnan provinces. Baekje's southern Wa is analyzed to refer to both the islands of Wa (Japan) and the Wa region in the Huaiji area of Zhejiang Province. The two capitals of Baekje, Geobalseong and Gomaseong, seem to refer to Chebak city in the Shandong Peninsula<sup>6</sup> and Gongju in the Korean Peninsula, respectively.

“Baekje was originally a branch of Buyeo. It was located on the ancient land of Mahan, 6,200 li east of the capital (Changan), north of the great sea, and south of the small sea. To the northeast, it reached Silla; to the west, it crossed the sea to Yuezhou; to the south, it crossed the sea to the Wa Kingdom; and to the north, it crossed the sea to Goguryeo. Moreover, there were two cities in the east and west where the king resided.”

According to “Old Book of Tang,” Baekje was located in a vast area encompassing the Liaoxi region and the Shandong Peninsula, extending to the coastal regions south of the Yangtze River including Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Guangdong, and Yunnan. It also included the southwestern coast of the Korean Peninsula and the Wa region of the archipelago, indicating a vast maritime state.

The records in New Book of Tang [19] supplement those

of Old Book of Tang. The seaside sunny side refers to the Liaoxi region and the Shandong area. The Shandong has been historically known as the place where the sun rises, or Yanggu. According to Book of Documents [20], in the “Yao Dian” section, it is recorded, “Emperor Yao commanded Xi Zhong to reside in Yuyi, i.e., Yanggu, and to reverently welcome the rising sun from Yanggu, thereby creating and orderly observing the eastern (spring agriculture) customs.” The rest of the content aligns with that of Old Book of Tang.

“Baekje is a branch of Buyeo. It is located on the sunny seaside, about 6,000 li east of the capital (Changan). To the west is Yuezhou, to the south is Wa (Japan), and to the north, it borders Goguryeo, all of which are reached by crossing the sea. To the east of the country is Silla. The king resides in two cities, one in the east and one in the west.”

As explored above, Mahan and Baekje were essentially one entity. According to Chinese historical records, Baekje, distinct from Onjo's HS, was founded in the ancient land of Dabang of the continent under the patronage of Mahan. The various dynasties of China classified Gutae as part of the Mahan lineage because they understood Baekje's origins through the envoys who frequently visited and communicated with them. This consistency in records about Baekje was thus achievable. The confusion of the real identity of Gutae's Baekje with HS was not by the ancient historians of China but by the contemporary Korean scholars.

Numerous researchers of Baekje have attempted to link Gutae Baekje with HS. However, each time they tried to connect Gutae Baekje with HS, the reality of Baekje became more obscure. The fundamental reason why Baekje in HTK and Baekje in Chinese historical texts like the RTK differ is because HS and Gutae Baekje were of different lineages. Onjo's Shipje were founded in the Han River basin and grew there, whereas Gutae Baekje, a country belonging to Mahan, was established in the ancient land of Dabang, passed through the Shandong area, and eventually settled in Ungjin Gomaseong in Gongju, Korea. Geobalseong, located in Chebak city on the Shandong region, was the capital of the ancient Goba-guk and also a core area of the Joseon forces.

The Shipje recorded in HTK and the Baekje mentioned in Chinese historical records such as RTK represent different forces. Notably, Onjo who was called the founder of Baekje in HTK does not appear in Chinese historical records about Baekje.

In the historical records of various Chinese dynasties, which have interacted with numerous Baekje envoys, it is consistently stated that Gutae founded Baekje in the ancient land of Dabang, and its capitals were Gomaseong and Geobalseong. The records in Chinese annals can be seen as reflecting the origin of Baekje as conveyed by Baekje envoys. In contrast, HTK states that the country first founded by Onjo was HS, which later, with the joining of the Biyu forces, came to be known as Baekje. This suggests the existence of two separate entities known as Baekje post the 3rd century. However, such a scenario seems implausible; there can only

<sup>6</sup> Upon examining ancient place names, it is said that there was a country called Goba-guk in ancient times in Chebak city.

be one truth. Therefore, we must rely on the accounts provided by Baekje's own envoys. Despite extensive discussions by numerous scholars on Baekje, the theory of Baekje in the Han River basin remains inconclusive, like a hamster running in a wheel. Why does this situation persist?

Firstly, the forced interpretation arises partly due to the fictitious placement of Han Dynasty commanderies like Daebang and Nakrang county on the Korean Peninsula. Establishing non-existent entities like Nakrang county in Pyongyang and Daebang county in Hwanghae Province and attempting to align all historical events with these settings inevitably led to strained and unrealistic interpretations. For instance, the claim that Gutae founded Baekje in the ancient land of Daebang of Hwanghae Province and then moved to the Han River basin leads to an absurd interpretation. It implies that the Gongsun family, who supported the founding of Gutae's Baekje, were located in Hwanghae Province on the Korean Peninsula, and that Sima Yi attacked them there. This interpretation is implausible and conflicts with historical records and geographic realities. Each time discussions involving the Gongsun family arise, such claims fall into serious self-contradiction.

Secondly, HS initially merged a part of Mahan and secured their territory in the Han River basin. They never expanded beyond this region. The root cause of fictitious claims, like the conquest of Mahan by King Geunchogo of Baekje in 369 AD, stems from baseless assumptions aimed at connecting HS with Baekje. These assumptions were both nonexistent and implausible. Thus, the history of Mahan Baekje merging with the Hansung ten tribes has been misinterpreted as if HS had conquered Mahan Baekje. However, the continuous discovery of archaeological artifacts centered around the Onggwan tombs in the Yeongsan River basin and subsequent analyses suggest that Mahan existed at least until the early reign of King Seong (around 530 AD). This undermines the theory of King Geunchogo's conquest of Mahan (Im Young-jin, 2014)[21]. In my view, Mahan and Baekje were integrated when, in the spring of 538 AD, in the 16th year of King Seong's reign, the national title was changed to Nambuyo and the capital was moved to Sabi.

Thirdly, as recorded in HTK, Shipje was established in the Han River basin. However, Kim Busik, the main author of HTK confused this with the merging of the Biyu forces, leading to the founding of Baekje. It's clear, as in various Chinese historical records that mention Baekje was founded when a hundred families crossed the sea, that the mere joining of Biyu forces could not lead to the establishment of Baekje with a hundred surnames. The appearance of the Shipje as Baekzan, or Baekje, is analyzed to begin from the time of King Jangsu, with the erection of the Gwanggaeto Stele. In the Gwanggaeto Stele, Baekzan appears as a vassal state or a colony of Korean Wa. The Zanguk or Wa mentioned in the Gwanggaeto Stele refers to the forces that had subjugated HS and Silla as their subjects. King Gwanggaeto conquered Baekzan but spared its king's life.

“Baekzan did not submit to righteousness and dared to come out and fight in all battles. The king, greatly angered, crossed the Ara River and pressed their fortress. The Baekzan soldiers fled to their dens, so he besieged and attacked their cities. The king of Baekzan, in panic and urgency, offered 1,000 male and female slaves and 1,000 bolts of fine cloth. He surrendered to the king, vowing, “From now on, I will forever be your subject.” Consequently, the Great King generously forgave their initial transgressions and recorded their later obedience and sincerity as admirable. Thus, he acquired 58 cities and 700 villages, took the brother of the Baekzan king and ten ministers, withdrew his army, and returned to the capital.”

The Baekzan mentioned in the Gwanggaeto Stele refers to HS forces. By this time, the Han River area was already under the control of the Mahan forces, represented as Wa in the records. HRJ narrates an incident where King Jinsa of Baekje, who went hunting instead of fighting against Goguryeo in the Battle of Gwanmiseong, was executed for his rudeness. King Jinsa was killed by King Ōjin. King Gwanggaeto had no reason to subjugate Baekzan as they were pro-Goguryeo. His main target was rather Wa or Zanguk, i.e., Mahan Baekje forces controlling them from behind. Eliminating these forces, who were influencing HS, now Baekzan, was a primary objective in Goguryeo's campaign to conquer the Korean Peninsula.

Overall, the early records in HTK significantly contradict the records in Chinese historical texts. Particularly, some interpretations in the HTK contain fictional exaggerations. The statement, “Later, when he came, the people joyfully followed him, so he changed the country's name to Baekje. Its lineage came together with Goguryeo from Buyeo, so it took Buyeo as its surname” is entirely inaccurate. This reflects the situation not immediately after Biyu's return to Wiryeseong but after HS were absorbed by Mahan Baekje. Originally founded in the ancient land of Daebang, Baekje later absorbed HS during King Gwanggaeto's conquest and established the Mahan Baekje federation. Consequently, the history of the Shipje was assimilated into Baekje. Consequently, as reflected in the records of Emperor Heonmu's reign in HRJ, where King Seong of Baekje reminisces, kings of the ten tribes such as King Chogo (166–214) and King Gusu (214–234) were included in the history of Baekje. The great Baekje was established after the unification of various forces, including the Yeongsan River Mahan forces, the continental Mahan Baekje forces, the Geum River Baekje forces, the Han River Shipje, and the Nakdong River Byeonjin forces.

#### 4. Diplomatic Role Division Between Mahan and Baekje

Analyzing Chinese historical records reveals an interesting pattern. During the Western Jin period, before the Jin Dynas-

ty moved south, only Mahan appears in diplomatic activities, with no mention of Baekje. However, in the Eastern Jin period and afterwards, only Baekje is recorded as conducting diplomatic activities. This clear demarcation is too distinct to be coincidental. Baekje existed even when only Mahan was active in diplomacy. During the Eastern Jin period, although Mahan still existed, it seems that Baekje was put forward for diplomatic engagements.

Book of Jin does not have a dedicated section on Baekje, leading many to believe that Baekje's state formation occurred very late. However, it is analyzed that during the period when Mahan was actively engaged in diplomacy, HS were already established in the Han River basin, and Gutae Baekje was founded in the Geum River basin. Thus, it's more reasonable to interpret that Baekje was not inactive in diplomacy; rather, Mahan represented the region as a whole.

Indeed, the first mention of Baekje in Book of Jin appears in the annals of Emperor Jianwen's second year (372 AD), and after this, mentions of Mahan in diplomatic contexts disappear as if they were never there. Following the diplomatic interaction with Western Jin in 291 AD, Mahan ceases to appear as a diplomatic entity in Chinese historical records. Later texts such as Book of Song and Book of Southern Qi [22] do not mention Mahan, featuring only Baekje in diplomatic activities.

In Book of Southern Qi, Gaya first appears, suggesting that by this period (around 479 AD), Gaya had become independent from the Mahan-Baekje federation. However, it's notable that Mahan, which had previously included Gaya as a vassal state, disappears from the diplomatic stage, with Baekje assuming all diplomatic roles. This would be inexplicable if Mahan and Baekje were separate entities. This pattern in the Chinese historical records suggests that after the Eastern Jin period, diplomatic channels were unified under Baekje by the Mahan-Baekje federation. In this context, the following content from BOL, particularly its chapter on the Dongyi tribes, is relevant for further reference.

“Among the various countries of the Dongyi tribes, Joseon was the most powerful, having been culturally influenced by Gi Ja, making its civilization compatible with ritual and music. During the Wei Dynasty, the eastern Joseon nations like Mahan and Jinhan had long-standing interactions with China. After the Jin Dynasty crossed the Yangtze River, the eastern envoys who came across the sea included Goguryeo and Baekje. During the Song and Qi Dynasties, they consistently paid tribute, and interactions became even more frequent when the Liang Dynasty flourished.”

This record suggests that during Cao Cao's Wei Dynasty period (220–265) and the Western Jin period (265–316), Mahan, Jinhan, and others engaged in diplomatic activities with China. However, after the Jin Dynasty crossed the Yangtze River in the Eastern Jin period (317–420), Mahan ceased to appear, and only Baekje is mentioned. Mahan's diplomatic activities seemingly disappear overnight. In 382 AD, five countries of the Dongyi appeared in the Eastern Jin record,

but it's unclear if this refers to Mahan. Therefore, it's more plausible to view that Mahan Baekje externally represented itself as Baekje rather than the records of Mahan disappearing.

The fact that Mahan and Baekje had a role-sharing arrangement in diplomacy is vividly evidenced in BOL, specifically in the chapter on Dongyi. Kim Busik, the compiler of HTK, seems to have not fully grasped this. The analysis suggests that Onjo and Biyu, initially leading the Buyeo forces as the ten tribes, established their capital in the Han River basin and managed the country correctly. However, Kim Busik apparently misunderstood the situation where the Han River ten tribes merged with Baekje. Not fully understanding the reality of Gutae Baekje, Kim Busik wrote that he could not know who was the real founder of Baekje in HTK.

However, since the early Shipje were later absorbed by Baekje, with all their history and achievements inherited by Baekje, it is reasonable to consider the early records of Shipje as valid. The only remaining issue is the recognition of Mahan's existence before the foundation of Baekje. The establishment of Mahan is analyzed to be around the late 3rd century BCE, making Mahan Baekje potentially the oldest among the three kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla in terms of origin.

Baekje, founded in the southern region of Nakrang, specifically in the ancient land of Daebang, is analyzed to have moved its royal family to Korea, while its main forces remained in the Liaodong region. As a result, during the period of great turmoil in China during the Sixteen Kingdoms era, when Goguryeo's power expanded and conquered regions like Xuanping, Nakrang, and Daebang in Liaodong under King Micheon, Baekje is thought to have moved to the Liaoxi region to secure new territories. This move by Baekje to Liaoxi was likely driven not only by a desire to expand its territory but also by a need to find new areas for survival amidst the fundamental shift in power dynamics in the north-east of China. This suggests that Goguryeo's offensive was considerably strong at the time.

As a result, Baekje appears in Yangjigongdo and BOL as possessing regions in the Liaoxi area. These areas were originally bases where the Mahan forces had established their territory. Therefore, it's more reasonable to interpret that Baekje moved closer to the mainland China rather than expanding or conquering new areas in Liaoxi, being pushed by Goguryeo's expansion.

In my re-evaluation of the locations of the 55 states of Mahan, it was found that Mahan was situated in the ancient land of Daebang, now the region south of Beijing near Tianjin (Park Tong, 2022) [23]. This area became a newly developed wasteland where the Daebang Commandery was established. Mahan then moved its base to Liaoxi following Goguryeo's major offensive. The theory of Liaoxi Baekje reflects this situation.

Baekje was originally founded in the ancient land of Mahan on the continent, inheriting the entire foundation of con-

tinental Mahan, which enabled the establishment of continental Baekje. The period when continental Mahan was established is understood to be when the Gongsun Du forces controlled both the Liaodong and Shandong regions. This was during the late Han Dynasty when China was in chaos due to the ascendance of young emperors, the power of external families, and the Yellow Turban Rebellion.

It was during this time that the Mahan forces established continental Mahan. The 55 states of Mahan mentioned in the RTK likely refer to various nations of that period. Among the nations of Mahan, it appears that the Mohe, a branch of the Xianbei people and part of the Lai-Yi ethnic group, were included. The country of Makro was founded by the ancestors of the Mohe Xianbei, including Makho-bal and other members of the Mak clan.

Even before Mahan, the Dongyi tribes were indigenous forces outside the mainland China centered around Luoyang, securing their territories. The absence of such records in historical texts is because these groups were considered part of the 'barbarian' periphery by mainland China, hence excluded from the records. RTK, in the preface of the Wei Book's chapter on Dongyi tribes, records the following.

"The Book of Documents states, "To the east, it reached the sea, and to the west, it extended to the desert." Within the system of the Nine Provinces, it is possible to speak of those regions, but beyond the remote wilderness areas, which can only be reached after several translations, there were no people who knew the customs of the countries different from China as the footsteps of the Han people or their carriages did not reach there. From the Yu to the Zhou dynasty, the Western Rong (Xirong) offered white jade rings as tribute, and the Dongyi tribes had tribute from the Sukshin. However, it took several years for these to reach [the central kingdom], showing the great distance involved... As Gongsun Yuan's ancestors held Liaodong for three generations, the Emperor considered it a remote area and delegated its affairs to the Gongsun family as matters beyond the country. Consequently, relations with the Dongyi tribes were severed, and they could no longer communicate with China. During the Jingchao period (A.D. 237~239), a large army was raised to kill Gongsun Yuan, and secretly crossed the sea to recover Nakrang and Daebang commanderies. After that, the regions beyond China stabilized, and the Dongyi tribes submitted."

The dynasties of China regarded the Liaodong region, where the Dongyi tribes lived, as beyond their realm and barely set foot there. Gongsun Du's proclamation as the King of Liaodong reflects this situation. Considering that even the Liaodong area near Beijing was viewed as a remote wilderness and not frequently visited, it is implausible that Chinese powers could have exerted influence as far as Pyongyang or Hwanghae Province in Korea.

The dynasties of China, after Jin Ge's attacks on Joseon and Liaodong, alternated between offensives and retreats against the Dongyi forces. Even up to the era of Qin Shi Huang, Liaodong was considered too distant. This is docu-

mented in Records of the Grand Historian.[24] Given that Wiman Joseon was located near Changli, Liaodong is determined to lie between these areas. It was in Daebang, south of Nakrang Commandery in this Liaodong region, that Gutae's Baekje was founded.

"The King of Joseon, Wiman, was originally a person from Yan. From the height of Yan's power, they had invaded and subjugated Jinbeon and Joseon, appointing officials and building walls and fortresses along the borders. After Qin conquered Yan, they assigned the region to the outer boundary of Liaodong. When Han rose, finding it difficult to defend due to the distance, they repaired the old fortresses of Liaodong and set the boundary at the Pei River, subjugating it under Yan."

Originally, Han existed as a part of Joseon. Some scholars argue that Han and Joseon are the same, known as the Han clan Joseon theory. Joseon was a country established by the union of various tribes of the Dongyi. In Guanzi [25], there is a record of trade between Bal Joseon and the State of Qi during the time of Duke Huan of Qi (685–643 BCE). The core force of Bal Joseon was the Bal power, with 'Bal' referring to the Yue Zhi. These Bal forces, also known as San Rong, Bei Rong, and Wu Zhong, constantly attacked the State of Yan. Until that time, Yan had not set foot on the shores of the Bohai Sea.

Between 300 BCE and 281 BCE, King Wuling of Zhao, wearing Hu (nomadic) attire, conquered the Zhongshan state, intensifying the Central Plains powers' offensives against Joseon forces. During this period, Joseon and Liaodong appear to have been lost to the State of Yan due to attacks by Jin Ge. Joseon reportedly lost about 2,000 li of land in all directions, with an east-west span of about 1,000 li.<sup>7</sup> As a result, it is analyzed that they retreated to the area around Changli in Hebei Province. Related to this event, Sima Qian's Records of the Grand Historian records the following: "The general of Yan, Jin Ge, attacked and defeated the Donghu, causing them to retreat over 1,000 li... Yan also built walls extending from Zhaoyang to Yangping, and established the commanderies of Shangqu, Eryang, Wubeiping, Liaoxi, and Liaodong to defend against the Hu."

During Jin Ge's attack, the Bal forces diversified into several groups, including the northern Buyeo forces, the Lai-Yi Mahan forces centered around maritime power, and Han, which was part of Joseon. At this time, Lai-Yi Mahan, or the Yue Zhi tribe, appears to have controlled the entire Liaodong and the Korean Peninsula south of Pyongyang, forming the state of Jin. King Jun of Joseon seems to have moved to Mahan in Pyongyang and founded a new state under the Han lineage.

Until the fall of Wiman Joseon, the Han forces are analyzed to have maintained their nation while being based

<sup>7</sup> In ancient China, distances were measured in li (about 400m), and land area was calculated by adding the east-west length to the north-south length. Therefore, if the area was a square, an east-west length of 1,000 li combined with a north-south length of 1,000 li would total 2,000 li.

within Wiman Joseon. At that time, many political entities coexisted within the umbrella of Joseon, with Mahan being a major force within Joseon. After the collapse of Wiman Joseon, the Han forces appear to have continued to exist in the Central Plains in the forms of Gimi and Huangfu. The shifts of Buyeo from Hyunto to Liaodong and Goguryeo being part of Hyunto all indicate that Buyeo and Goguryeo existed in the peripheral regions of the Han Dynasty. As for Mahan Baekje, in the case of the continent, the high-ranking officials were appointed as governors, and in the Korean Peninsula, as kings. This was a survival strategy necessarily chosen by continental Mahan or continental Baekje to maintain their influence.

With the appointment of Gongsun Du as the Governor of Liaodong, the situation underwent a significant shift. Gongsun Du formed alliances with Han and Buyeo to counterbalance Goguryeo and the Xianbei tribes, establishing an independent area separate from the Central Plains, and secured a base in the Shandong region. Gongsun Du's forces effectively established an allied regime with Mahan and Buyeo. The Gongsun family sought a stronger alliance with the Han forces, and as a result, with the help of 30,000 Ha people brought by Buyeo and Goguryeo defectors, Gutae founded the kingdom of Baekje in the ancient land of Daebang. Gutae became Gongsun Du's son-in-law, elevating Baekje to a new powerful state among the Dongyi. Gutae's Baekje was established in Mahan's land with the support of Mahan. However, throughout the Western Jin period, Baekje did not engage in diplomatic activities.

Following their initial establishment, the Gongsun family expanded their influence from the Liaodong region but eventually fell in 238 AD due to Sima Yi's invasion. Sima Yi massacred or took many Han Chinese from Liaodong to Wei. The subjugation of the Han Chinese forces in Liaodong inadvertently strengthened the role of the Dongyi Mahan. According to Chinese historical records, even after Sima Yi's attack, the jade seal for the King of Buyeo remained in Hyunto, indicating that Baekje was not a target during the downfall of Gongsun Yuan. Sima Yan, the grandson of Sima Yi, re-established the kingdom of Buyeo after it was destroyed by the Xianbei leader Murong Huang. From the establishment of early Mahan to the rise of the Gutae forces as a powerful entity, Mahan represented the Three Hans.

Baekje's diplomatic engagement with the Chinese dynasties began during the Eastern Jin period. In Book of Jin, the annals of Emperor Jianwen's second year (372 AD) record, "In spring, first month of the xinchou year, the kings of Baekje and Linyi each sent envoys offering tribute. In June, an envoy was sent to appoint King Yeogu of Baekje as the General Pacifying the East and Governor of Nakrang." This marks the beginning of Baekje's full-fledged diplomacy with China. Subsequent Baekje envoys to Eastern Jin include those in Jianwen 3 (373 AD), Taiyuan 4 (379 AD), Taiyuan 9 (384 AD), Yixi 2 (406 AD), and Yixi 12 (416 AD).

Interestingly, HS do not appear in any Chinese historical

records until King Geunchogo's reign. This suggests that Shipje did not possess independent diplomatic rights. HTK first mentions in the 27th year of King Geunchogo's reign (372 AD) that envoys were sent to the Jin Dynasty as tribute, but there is no record of a Baekje king's investiture. Despite Kim Busik stating that Onjo and Biyu joined forces to change the nation's name from Shipje to Baekje, he did not record any investiture of a Baekje king.

The accuracy of King Geunchogo sending envoys to the Jin Dynasty in the second year of Jianwen (372 AD) is unclear. Because King Geunchogo was of the Hae clan, not the Yeo clan. Therefore, the record in HTK of Shipje sending envoys to Jin appears to be compiled based on Chinese historical records. However, it was not Baekje but Shipje that existed in Hansung. Consequently, attempts to link Baekje with HS have inevitably led to confusion.

King Yeogu, who was conferred as the king of Baekje, was not King Geunchogo. If King Geunchogo had been appointed as the king of Baekje, it would have been recorded as a significant historical event in the HTK. However, there is no mention of such an event in the HTK. This suggests that Shipje, lacking independent diplomatic rights, were part of the Mahan confederation. If they had been a sovereign state, engaging in diplomatic activities would have been natural. Yet, from its founder Onjo to King Geunchogo, Shipje did not conduct diplomatic activities with China. This is evident upon a thorough review of the records in the HTK.

The Qinding Manzhou Yuanliu Kao [26], based on the Cheongbuwon-gu, records, "In the second year of Jianwen of Jin (372 AD), envoys were sent in January, and in June, Yeogu of Baekje was conferred as the king. Yeogu's Baekje was a descendant of Buyeo King Wi Gutae. That is why Buyeo was taken as the surname." Additionally, citing "Tonggo," it clearly states, "Baekje is a descendant of Buyeo King Wi Gutae from the late Han period..."

After Yeogu, the Baekje throne passed to Yeohwi. In 386 AD, Eastern Jin conferred the crown prince Yeohwi of Gutae's Baekje as the General Pacifying the East and king of Baekje. In 386 AD, the king of HS was King Jinsa. If Yeogu were King Geunchogo, then Yeohwi should have been King Gungusu, but he was not. Moreover, since King Geunchogo was not of the Yeo clan, his son, King Gungusu, would not be of the Yeo clan either. Trying to connect the investiture of the Yeo clan of Gutae's Baekje to King Geunchogo of Shipje leads to an untenable situation. In other words, Yeogu outlived King Geunchogo and passed the throne of Baekje to Yeohwi.

## 5. Mahan Not Mentioned in HRJ

In ancient times, the relationship between Japan and the Yeongsan River forces was not just close but seemingly integrated. Evidence from "front-square rear-round tumulus," pottery, and gilt-bronze shoes, along with DNA analysis of remains in the Yeongsan River basin, indicates that the ar-

chipelago's forces were heavily influenced by the Mahan forces of the Yeongsan River region. Moreover, it is analyzed that the Soga clan, who pioneered the Asuka civilization, is connected to the Mok clan, who constructed apartment-style tombs in Hoejin, Naju (Park Tong, 2020)[27]. Despite this, HRJ does not record a single word about Mahan.

Why is this the case? If HRJ had included even a few lines about Mahan, it would have implied that Mahan was a minor power. However, the complete absence of any record of Mahan paradoxically suggests that Mahan and Baekje were essentially the same entity. That is, the compilers of HRJ, as part of the Yeongsan River Mahan forces, unified their identity under Baekje in their descriptions. For instance, historical records possessed by the Mok clan, which pertained to the history of Mahan, were utilized in compiling the HRJ, under the name of Records of Baekje. This is particularly evident in the documentation of General Mokra Geunja, who led the conquest of the seven kingdoms of Gaya, as a Baekje general.

“In the year 49, in the spring, in the third month, Hwangjeonbyeol and Nokabyeol were appointed as generals. They, along with Gujeo and others, organized their troops and crossed the sea to Taksun-guk, intending to attack Silla. At that time, someone said, “Our military forces are too few to defeat Silla. Please send back Sabakgero and request more troops.” Consequently, Mokra Geunja and Sasanogwe [the surnames of these two individuals are unknown, but Mokra Geunja was a general of Baekje] were ordered to lead elite troops and join Sabakgero. Later, all gathered in Taksun and attacked Silla, conquering and pacifying the seven kingdoms of Bijabal, Namgara, Rokguk, Anra, Dara, Taksun, and Gara.”

The entry for the 49th year of Empress Jingū in HRJ is a famous record often cited as evidence for the theory of Mimana Japan-governorate. Japanese colonial historians interpreted this to mean that Empress Jingū conquered Gaya in 369 AD, by adjusting the date to 120 years earlier. Similarly, some Korean historians who followed colonial historiography claimed that King Geunchogo (reinterpreted as Empress Jingū) conquered Mahan and Gaya. The Mimana Japan-governorate theory and King Geunchogo's conquest of Gaya are essentially two sides of the same colonial historiographical approach, merely changing the main subject.

However, a close examination of this entry reveals that the general leading the war was Mokra Geunja, and he is identified as a general of Baekje. Mokra Geunja is a key ancestor of the Mok clan located in Hoejin, Naju. According to Park Tong (2020), the apartment-style tombs in Hoejin, Naju, are analyzed to be the graves of the Mok clan from the Yeongsan River region. Sasanogwe can be identified as belonging to the Sa clan based in Iksan in the Geum River basin. Therefore, this entry is likely based on the Records of Baekje held by the Mok clan.

The recording of a general from the Yeongsan River region as a general of Baekje in historical texts indicates that

Mahan was referred to as Baekje. This suggests that the war mentioned in the record was not waged by Empress Jingū, but by King Jin of Mahan. Empress Jingū could not have issued commands to Mokra Geunja and Sasanogwe, who were not her subordinate generals. Therefore, it's clear that this record was an insertion from the “Records of Baekje.”

In HTK and Memorabilia of Three Kingdoms (Samguk Yusa) [28], the conquest of Gaya is recorded as the Posaengpalkuk War. As recorded in the Samguk Yusa, this was a war waged by the forces of King Jin of Mahan, based in Bannam, Naju, also known as Bora-guk or Bala-guk, in alliance with the Byeonjin's Posaeng countries, against Ara Gaya and Geumgwang Gaya.

According to the 4th year of Emperor Huan's reign in HRJ, he planned to eliminate the Soga clan by summoning Soga No Iruka to the imperial palace under the guise of a personal meeting and assassinating him. Emperor Tenji and his chief minister, Nakatomi No Kamatari, finally succeeded in killing Soga No Iruka and carried out the coup d'état known as the 'Isshi Incident.' In this turmoil, Soga No Emishi, anticipating his imminent death, burned various national records.

“On the day of Ki-Yu (13th), before their execution, Soga No Emishi and others burned all the records including the Chronicles of the Emperors, National Chronicles, and precious treasures. Senka Hyochoku quickly retrieved the burning Chronicles and presented it to Nakatomi No Kamatari.”

It is interpreted that among the national records (Koki) burned at this time were the Records of Baekje, held by the Soga clan, as they had custody of the Mok clan's records. This is because Fujiwara No Fuhito, the second son of Nakatomi No Kamatari, compiled HRJ. The Empress Jingū's record in HRJ was likely compiled by piecing together parts of the Records of Baekje, which had a similar timeline. Thus, the history of King Jin of Mahan was transferred to HRJ. However, they couldn't bring themselves to record Mokra Geunja as a subordinate of Empress Jingū and instead wrote him down as a general of Baekje. Since Mokra Geunja was a general under King Jin of Mahan, in this context, Baekje refers to Mahan Baekje.

During that time, the archipelago (Japan) was under the control of the vast maritime power of Mahan, which dominated the Korean Peninsula and the Northeast region of China. Consequently, numerous institutional products and materials of Mahan were introduced to or reimported into the archipelago. Among these, the most notable are the 'front-square rear-round tumulus' burial styles found only in the Yeongsan River area like the Sindaek Tumuli in Hampyeong, South Jeolla Province of Korea.

The largest of these tumuli in the archipelago is the mausoleum of Emperor Nintoku, located in Osaka. At that time many officials and military leaders traveled between the Korean Peninsula and the archipelago. Among them, Gonji forces who were dispatched to Wa (Japan) during King Gero's reign, returned from Kyushu following the fall of Hansung Baekje (at this time, HS was absorbed by Baekje)

and subsequently died in a power struggle for the throne of Ungjin Baekje. It is speculated that they were buried in the 'front-square rear-round tumulus found in the Yeongsan River region.

Currently, there are archaeologists who have not accurately understood the nature of Wa (ancient Dongyi) and the political-military relationship between Mahan and Japanese Wa. Consequently, when artifacts indicative of Wa connections are found in front-square rear-round tumuli, some hesitate to excavate properly, fearing it might lend credence to the Mimana Japan-governorate theory. This has led to a situation where some tumuli have been left almost unattended, resulting in the looting of numerous national-treasure-level artifacts. The individuals buried in these tumuli were people from the archipelago, a colony under Mahan, who worked in Wa (Japan) and were buried in their homeland upon their return. The neglect and tacit acceptance of looting of these important cultural sites demand accountability. Even now, cultural artifacts excavated in the Yeongsan River region are being traded illegally, showing a lack of historical consciousness, as descendants are selling heritage items from their ancestors' tombs without any moral qualms.

The fact that the archipelago (ancient Japan) was under the rule of Mahan can also be confirmed by the discovery of various types of pottery, such as comb-pattern pottery, which are exclusively found in the Yeongsan River region, in the archipelago as well. Comb-pattern pottery excavated in Yeongdong-ri, Naju, and Manwolchong, Haenam, was also found in the Fukuoka Bansuka tomb in Japan, identical in design. Since pottery is a daily utility item for ordinary people, its presence indicates that the people of Wa in the archipelago shared the same daily life and culture as those in the Yeongsan River region of Mahan.

Moreover, a gilt-bronze shoe from the late 6th century, featuring a fish design on its base, was excavated from the Fujinoki tomb in Nara, Japan. Initially highlighted as a unique artifact of the archipelago, the subsequent discovery of similar gilt-bronze shoes with fish motifs from the late 5th to early 6th century in the apartment-style tombs of Hoejin, Naju, distinctly demonstrated the influence of Mahan forces on the Asuka civilization.

According to the 5th year of Emperor Sujun's reign in HRJ, Soga No Umako, who initiated the Asuka civilization, assassinated Emperor Sujun and conducted his funeral on the same day. Originally a descendant of the Mok clan, the Soga clan adopted 'Soga' as their surname, reflecting their first settlement in the archipelago. Later, they added one more character to their name, changing from Mok to Lin, symbolizing a king.

The Soga clan effectively established themselves as the ruling kings of the archipelago. In the 5th year of Emperor Sujun's reign, when Emperor Sujun attempted to eliminate Soga No Umako, Umako pre-empted this and assassinated the emperor, immediately conducting his funeral. This unprecedented event of a subject killing an emperor is one of

the most dramatic incidents in HRJ. Soga No Umako also eliminated potential rivals to his power, including Prince Hatsusebe, Prince Takeda, and the Mononobe clan. The individual buried in the Fujinoki tomb is speculated to be Emperor Sujun, making it a significant historical site.

The discovery of gilt-bronze shoes with fish motifs on the bottom from the Fujinoki tomb is significant. These shoes were made about a hundred years later than similar shoes found in Tomb 96 of the apartment-style tombs in Bokam-ri, Naju. Considering that the Soga clan, key figures in the Asuka civilization, were active as the Mok clan in the Korean Peninsula, it becomes evident that they were descendants of the Mahan forces from the Yeongsan River region.

Furthermore, the excavation of 23 human skeletons from a 5th-6th century tomb in Yeongdong-ri, Dasi-myeon, Naju, is noteworthy. DNA analysis showed that these individuals were genetically closer to modern Japanese than to the contemporaries of Shipse or Silla of the same era. Despite clear evidence of migration from the Yeongsan River region of Mahan to the archipelago, HRJ makes no mention of Mahan, only referencing Baekje.

This omission indicates that the powers controlling the archipelago identified themselves as Baekje, that is Mahan Baekje, reflecting their lineage and cultural heritage. This historical connection between Mahan and the early Japanese archipelago, though often overlooked, is crucial in understanding the shared heritage and interactions across the Korean Strait during ancient times.

## 6. Yuyi and Mahan in the Titles of the Tang-Silla Allied Commanders During the Fall of Baekje

According to Old Book of Tang in the section on Silla, during the Tang-Silla allied campaign against Baekje, Emperor Gaozong of Tang granted Kim Chun-chu of Silla the official title of "General of the Expedition against Yuyi." This title implies a military commander in charge of subjugating the Yuyi region, essentially equating to the commander for the conquest of Baekje. Why then did Tang not refer to this role as a commander for subjugating Baekje, but instead as a commander for the Yuyi?

In this context, "Yuyi" refers to the tribal name of Yue Zhi forces, which had their capital in Bannam Naju, indicating their connection to the Mahan federation. The Yuyi had bases in the Shandong area as well and were prominent Dongyi tribes governing from the Yue Zhi region of Mahan. An ink-brushed wood strip with the inscription "Yuyi" along with a branded mark was also unearthed in Gwanbuk-ri, Buyeo County Korea, further evidencing their presence.

"In the 5th year of Xianqing (A.D. 660), the Grand General of the Left Military Guard, Su Dingfang was appointed as the Chief Commander of Ungjin Road, leading an army of 100,000, both naval and land forces. Subsequently, Kim

Chun-chu was appointed as the General of the Expedition against Yuyi, tasked with working alongside Su Dingfang to subdue Baekje. They captured the king of Baekje, Buyeo Uija, and presented him at the imperial court.“

HTK also contains a similar account as recorded below. The term "Shenqiu" in Su Dingfang's title refers to Yanran Mountain. Ban Gu of the Han Dynasty commemorated the great victory of Dou Xian, who annihilated the Northern Xiongnu, by writing the Inscription of Sealing Yanran Mountain and preserving it on a stele. It states, "In the far distant borders, Shenqiu was sealed, and a great monument was erected." Here, Shenqiu is identified as Yanran Mountain, now named Hangai Mountain in Mongolia. This suggests that the Tang Dynasty's campaign against Baekje was considered akin to the conquest of the Northern Xiongnu. It implies that the Northern powers residing in Buyeo or other regions were the intended targets of this reference.

"In the 3rd month of the 7th year (660), Emperor Gaozong of Tang appointed Su Dingfang, the Grand General of the Left Military Guard as Chief Commander of the Shenqiu Expedition, and Kim In-mun as the Deputy Chief Commander. Su commanded Liu Baoying, the General of the Left Valiant Guards, among others, to lead an army of 130,000, both naval and land forces, to attack Baekje. Furthermore, by imperial decree, the king (Kim Chun-chu) was appointed as the General of the Expedition against Yuyi, leading generals and soldiers to support them."

In the Inscription of the Great Tang Conquest of the Baekje Kingdom engraved on the five-story stone pagoda at Jeongnimsaji Temple in Buyeo, Su Dingfang's title is described as "Envoy with a Staff of Authority, Grand Commander of Fourteen Roads including Shenqiu, Yuyi, Mahan, Ungjin, Left Military Guard Grand General, Pillar of the State, Duke of Xing Country, Su Dingfang." Notably, this inscription includes references to Yuyi and Mahan in Su Dingfang's title. Additionally, regarding Cho Gyesuk, a general assisting Su Dingfang, the inscription states, "Deputy Commander of Yuyi Road, Right Military Marquis, Chief Commandant, Pillar of the State, Cho Gyesuk," where Yuyi is again mentioned.

In this context, "Yuyi" refers to the Yue Zhi forces, and "Mahan" denotes the Mahan of Yue Zhi Kingdom, which was based in Naju. The appearance of Yuyi and Mahan in the context of Buyeo's Baekje highlights that Mahan was integrally linked with Baekje, sharing its fate until Baekje's collapse. Mahan didn't dissolve but transformed into Baekje, relocating its capital to Buyeo. This suggests that during the Ungjin Baekje period, amidst ongoing centralization conflicts, the capital was moved to Buyeo, changing the state's name to South Buyeo. The Mahan forces from Yue Zhi Kingdom then moved to Buyeo, coexisting within the Baekje royal court. This interpretation shows a deep intertwining of Mahan and Baekje's histories and identities.

Therefore, it can be understood that Mahan was not dissolved and absorbed by Baekje, but rather, Mahan continued

to exist within Baekje. It was not a case of Baekje absorbing Mahan; instead, Mahan integrated into Baekje. In essence, the entity known as Baekje was, in reality, Mahan. This interpretation suggests that Kim Busik's HTK omitted Mahan's history, thereby inadvertently diminishing the scope of Baekje's history. If Baekje's history is traced back to include Mahan, founded around the late 3rd century BC, with Jinhan forces joining it, this would contradict the narrative presented in HTK.

Furthermore, while Kim Busik recorded Silla as having unified the three kingdoms, the Inscription of the Great Tang Conquest of the Baekje Kingdom mentions the unification of the Three Hans. In the inscription, "Duke of Xing Country" refers to Su Dingfang, "Nine Tribes" signifies the nine tribes of the Dongyi, and "Three Han" represents the Hans, symbolized by Mahan, indicating that Mahan-Baekje represented the unification of the Three Hans. Su Dingfang achieved victory twice: first, he conquered the nine tribes of the Dongyi, located in the Shandong and Northern Hebei regions, and second, he subdued Mahan-Baekje in Korea.

"Duke of Xing Country was benevolent as a rotating fan and his grace was deeper than the offering of new wine. Those who defied his orders were purged with the sternness of autumn frost, while those who surrendered were drenched in the grace like the dew of spring. Once he mobilized his army, he pacified the Nine Tribes, and with two victorious campaigns, he subdued the Three Hans..."

The notable aspect in the inscription is the mention that Baekje had 240,000 households with a population of 6.2 million. This figure suggests an unusually high population relative to the number of households. Even if we assume an average of 5 persons per household, it would amount to around 1.2 million people, yet the recorded population is about six times higher. While some might argue this is an exaggeration or a recording error, considering that the ratio of about 5 persons per household was commonly understood, insisting on a figure of 6.2 million indicates that Mahan-Baekje was not merely confined to the Korean Peninsula.

"The inscription reads: "Altogether, with the establishment of 5 military governors, 37 provinces, and 250 counties, households were organized into 240,000 and a population of 6.2 million was arranged, thus transforming the customs of all these barbarians."

The name of Sabi City of Buyeo being also known as Yuyi County further highlights the connection between Baekje and Mahan. Yuyi, synonymous with Yue Zhi, indicates that Mahan was not destroyed but was integrally part of Baekje. This suggests that Mahan abandoned its confederate structure and converged towards the central authority of Baekje. The 'Sabi' refers to the Si River in Shandong Province and the Bi River in Jiangsu Province. While the term Sabi initially denoted the Baekma River in Buyeo, the origins of the name Sabi are traced back to Shandong and Jiangsu. The Si River flows through Shandong, and according to Hanshu Geography, it originates in Shuixi County of Zejun County. The Bi River,

mentioned in the same source in the section on Yegang County's Qian County, originates from Bi Mountain, flowing north to reach Shouchun and joining Xiaopi Water. This reflects that Baekje had a presence in the areas of Shandong and Jiangsu Provinces.

From the above discussion, it's clear that the Tang Dynasty understood Baekje as synonymous with Yuyi and Mahan, and their campaign was explicitly aimed at subduing these entities. Therefore, Yuyi, or Yue Zhi, can be seen as an equivalent force to Baekje. Notably, both Old Book of Tang and HTK mention Kim Chun-Chu being appointed as the General of the Expedition against Yuyi, indicating that Tang dynasty recognized Yuyi, and by extension Baekje, as the same entity. This demonstrates that in the eyes of the Tang Dynasty, Yuyi was effectively Baekje.

## 7. Numerous Other Evidences

Apart from the arguments presented above, there are numerous other pieces of evidence that support the existence and significance of Mahan-Baekje. Here are some key points.

Firstly, after the fall of Baekje, the phrase 'Jinjo-in' appears in the Inscription on the Tomb of Buyeo Yung. This tombstone, excavated in Luoyang, Henan Province, states, "The deceased, whose name is Yung and also styled as Yung, was a person of Baekje Jinjo-in." Furthermore, it mentions that the remaining forces of Mahan continued to resist and were still gathering strength. In order to pacify the Mahan people, "the deceased was appointed as the Governor of Ungjin and ennobled as the Duke of Baekje County, and subsequently, he was also made the Grand Ambassador for Pacification of the Mahan Region."

The term "Jinjo-in" in the tombstone inscription refers to a person from the royal family of the Mahan Jin King. Jinjo refers to the royal court of the Jin King, indicating that the Buyeo clan of Baekje royal family and the Mahan Jin King shared a common royal lineage. This evidence supports the assertion that Baekje and Mahan (Yuyi Mahan) were essentially the same entity.

Also the appointment, even after the collapse of Baekje, to pacify the remaining Mahan forces, suggests that Mahan and Baekje were considered a single entity. The continued uprising of Mahan remnants after Baekje's fall and the specific appointment to pacify Mahan indicate the intertwined nature of these two entities. This connection reinforces the view that Mahan and Baekje were not distinct entities but rather a unified political and cultural force in the region.

Secondly, the Genealogy of the Ouchi Clan, related to one of the largest military families in 14th-century Japan, the Ouchi clan, contains records regarding Prince Imseong, which also reference Mahan-Baekje. The genealogy states:

"Prince Imseong was the second son of Baekje Country, Mahan Emperor, King Qi. He arrived at the Japanese royal court on March 2nd in the 19th year of Emperor Suiko (611 AD)... He died at the age of 81 in November of the 3rd year

of Emperor Jomei (657 AD)."

According to this record, Prince Imseong was born in 576 AD. During this period, the ruler of Mahan-Baekje was King Wideok. The term "country" refers to the external name used for the nation, which was Baekje Country, and internally, the ruler was referred to as the Emperor of Mahan. Epigraphic evidence suggests that King Wideok was referred to as King Chang during his reign and also possibly as King Qi. The HTK records that he was posthumously named King Wideok.

This record indicates that the Baekje Kingdom internally used the title of Mahan Emperor, pointing towards a fusion of Baekje and Mahan identities. This fusion reflects a complex socio-political landscape where external and internal designations might have varied, yet they represented a unified entity in practice. The reference to Prince Imseong's lineage in the Ouchi family genealogy adds an interesting dimension to the historical narrative, suggesting a deeper connection between Baekje, Mahan, and the Japanese archipelago.

The key point here is the transition from a confederation to an integrated Mahan-Baekje empire during King Seong's reign, leading to the adoption of the imperial title Emperor. This is evident in the stone epitaph of King Muryeong, which refers to the death of an emperor with the word 'Bong(emperor's death).' Additionally, as indicated in the Ouchi family genealogy, King Wideok, a son of King Seong, was referred to as an emperor. The term 'Chanje,' meaning a self-proclaimed or usurped emperor, appears in the Tombstone Inscription of General Ye (Choi Sang-gi, 2014)[29]. The appearance of 'Chanje' in a stele associated with the Ye Sikjin family, known for betraying Baekje, suggests that King Uija, the last king of Baekje, also claimed the imperial title.

Given that Mahan-Baekje spanned the mainland China, the Korean peninsula, and the Japanese archipelago, commanding multiple kings, it is plausible that the title of emperor was used to denote the supreme ruler of this expansive empire. This historical evolution reflects a significant shift in the political and cultural identity of the Mahan-Baekje entity, highlighting its complexity and the breadth of its influence across regions.

According to the "Book of Sui" and the "Book of the Northern Dynasty," there were eight major clans within Baekje, described as "the country's great eight surnames." These clans included the Sa, Yeon, Ri, Hae, Jin, Guk, Mok, and Myo families. During the era of HS (the early period of Baekje centered around present-day Seoul), the Hae and Jin clans were predominant. However, in the subsequent Ungjin Baekje period (when Baekje's capital moved to Ungjin, present-day Gongju), these clans became less prominent, and new clans like the Mok and Sa rose to dominance.

Research into the occupants of the apartment-style tombs in Naju Hoejin suggests that these were burial sites for members of the Mok clan, indicating their significant presence in the Yeongsan River region. Additionally, the Sa clan emerged

as a powerful group in the Iksan area, in the upper reaches of the Geum River. Furthermore, the remaining clans, Myo, Guk, Lyeo, and Yeon, are identified with the continental Baekje's families, mainly from the Shandong area. Their emergence during the Sabi period of Baekje (when Baekje's capital was in Sabi, present-day Buyeo) reflects the integration of Mahan and Baekje, highlighting these clans' ascendancy within the Jinjo, the royal court of Baekje.

This account illustrates the complex socio-political landscape of Baekje, showcasing the integration and shifts in power among various clans over different periods. The changing dynamics and intermingling of these clans underscore the intricate history of Baekje and its relationship with the broader Mahan confederacy.

Thirdly, while the exact time of the establishment of Continental Baekje remains uncertain, there is clear evidence of the existence of Continental Mahan. Mahan, centered around the Yeongsan River area in Korea and the Yuyi tribe in Shandong China, was established as Lai-Yi Mahan. According to the RTK, Han Chapter, they established 55 countries over an area of about 4,000 li south of Daebang, extending beyond just the Korean Peninsula.

My re-evaluation of Mahan's 55 countries (Park Tong, 2022) reveals their presence from the Shandong area to the areas south of Beijing in Central China. Old Book of Tang, in its Baekje section, mentions Baekje's domain extending from the Liaoxi region to Shandong and the Yue Province areas. Yue Province was where the Yue kingdom's power was concentrated. Imagining the extent of Continental Baekje's territory, which included not only the Shandong Area but also Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, and the Guangxi Autonomous Region - both northern and southern regions of Central China - is almost inconceivable from the perspective of the Hanseong Baekje theory. This has led to claims that even the records in Chinese history books are absurd. However, similar contents are recorded in New Book of Tang as well.

According to New Book of Tang, the coastal sunlit areas referred to the Liaoxi region and the Shandong region. Shandong has been known since ancient times as Yanggok, inhabited by the Yuyi tribe. The vast entity of Continental Baekje becomes clear when understood as a nation founded by the Mahan, centralizing around the Yue Zhi and Oson tribes. The southern regions of China and the Shandong area were naturally dominated over a long period, involving the transportation of Hwajeonok from the Kunlun Mountains, roots of the Korean nation linked to the Yue Zhi and Oson tribes. The main components of Mahan, the Yuyi and Oson tribes, were descendants of the Ha and Shang dynasties of mainland China, who networked the entire China region using jade as a medium. During the Zhou Dynasty, living in Shandong Area as Yuyi, they engaged in jade trade with the State of Qi.

The Yue Zhi and Oson forces were among the two major powers contending for world hegemony at the time, alongside the Xiongnu. As a result, their descendants, Mahan, secured regions in southern China, including Zhejiang, Fujian,

Guangdong, and Guangxi provinces, as their territories in ancient times. However, the Yangjigongdo states that King Muryeong of Baekje opened the 22 Tamna Administrative Regions. It seems implausible for even a great conqueror of the time to extend his reach to the southern regions of China. These areas were likely the 22 Tamna Administrative Regions already established by Mahan, which were handed over to King Muryeong during his reign by the Mahan royal court.

Currently, place names like Baekje Heo and Baekje Hyang exist in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. It has been confirmed that certain kitchen stoves, millstones, and single-legged pestles, which were uniquely used by people from the Jeolla Province centered around the Yeongsan River area, still exist in these regions. Furthermore, according to the Baidu Encyclopedia, these areas are predominantly inhabited by the Na and Roh families (Park Tong, 2020).

All of these elements suggest that the territory wasn't conquered as a result of expansion activities by Gutae Baekje in the early 3rd century, but rather it was an area developed over centuries by continental Mahan. The existence of place names like Baekje Heo and Baekje Hyang in areas populated by the Na and Roh families in the Guangxi region indicates that these families are descendants of Mahan, and with the establishment of Mahan Baekje, the area's place names were uniformly changed to Baekje.

The records of continental Baekje are consistently presented in Book of Song, BOL and Yangjigongdo, indicating that during the Western Jin period, Baekje occupied the lands of Liaoxi and Jinpyeong counties. However, Liaoxi is located near present-day Beijing, while Jinpyeong County, referred to in the geography section of Book of Song under the Guangzhou County section, is now Onyeong County in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,<sup>8</sup> where a place name, Baekje Hyang, exists. Additionally, the Na and Roh families are predominantly found in this area, suggesting a potential connection with the Na and Roh families of Naju and Gwangju, Korea. Further research is needed to explore the connections between these families and Baekje.

These records do not merely indicate the existence of Baekje in the two counties of Liaoxi and Jinpyeong but imply that Baekje had established a contiguous territory along the coast, stretching from Liaoxi to the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

## 8. Conclusion

In this discussion, the author examined various evidences to support the hypothesis that Mahan and Baekje were essentially the same entity. The conclusions drawn are as follows.

<sup>8</sup> In the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region's Yongning County, there exists a place named Baekje Hyang. Furthermore, this area has a concentrated distribution of the Na and Roh surnames, suggesting a potential connection with the Na and Roh surnames found in Naju and Gwangju Korea. Future research into these groups may reveal deeper links to Baekje.

Firstly, Baekje is essentially the same as Mahan, established around the late 3rd century BC. This development occurred after the territories of East-West and South-North, each spanning about a thousand ri, were seized during Jin Ge's invasions of Joseon and Liaodong. The Baekje entity emerged as the Bal Joseon forces in the region diversified. While Gutae Baekje was established in the early 3rd century AD, it is considered to have inherited the legacy of Mahan, thereby extending Baekje's historical timeline back to the late 3rd century BC. Additionally, since Shipje was absorbed by Gutae Baekje, its history should also be integrated into the broader history of Baekje.

Secondly, Shipje and Baekje, while both originating from Buyeo, were distinct entities with different lineages. HS was derived from the Goguryeo system, whereas Gutae Baekje was rooted in the Mahan system. This fundamental difference explains why attempts to link Gutae Baekje with HS are inevitably destined to fail. The ongoing confusion and lack of a definitive theory in Baekje history studies stem from the unfounded efforts to connect Gutae Baekje with Shipje. Acknowledging these as separate political entities is essential for a more rational and valid interpretation of Baekje history.

Thirdly, the hypothesis of a powerful Baekje existing in the Han River region lacks archaeological validation. Due to the absence of extensive plains in the Han River region, it was challenging for a large-scale Baekje to establish itself there in ancient times. The Pungnap Earthen Fortress, claimed to be Baekje's royal fortress, has been revealed to not have been constructed before the 4th century, and the absence of cornerstone structures has been identified. Consequently, it has not received official recognition from UNESCO. For many years, numerous Baekje researchers have been building upon this unverified narrative.

Lastly, Baekje is essentially the same as Mahan. Mahan used the name Baekje as its state designation. Therefore, the fictitious claims that King Geunchogo of HS attacked and conquered Mahan cannot be substantiated any longer. Archaeologists, especially those specializing in Mahan studies, have increasingly supported the view that Mahan existed until the 6th century during King Seong's reign, marking a significant achievement from an archaeological perspective.

However, these assertions were made without recognizing that Mahan and Baekje were the same entity. In this regard, the role of archaeologists specializing in Mahan should be highly valued. However, the question remains why Mahan, being originally Baekje, would have to face attacks from Baekje itself. This represents a complex challenge that the Korean historical academic community has inadvertently imposed on these researchers.

The Yeongsan River Mahan region should now be reevaluated as the site of an emperor's reign. During the reign of King Seong, Baekje, integrated with Mahan, changed its state name to South Buyeo and moved its capital to Buyeo in South Chungcheong Province. Consequently, the use of royal tombs, such as the Onggwan-style tombs, ceased. These

tombs, requiring considerable resources to construct, symbolized the power of an emperor. However, as the political landscape evolved away from a loosely organized confederacy, which was disadvantageous for maintaining centralized power, there was a shift towards consolidating power in a central location.

In this process, the influence of the aristocracy, including the Great Eight Clans, strengthened leading to Baekje's rapid decline. During King Seong's reign, internal contradictions were latent, especially due to wars with Silla, but these contradictions intensified during King Wideok's reign, culminating in a coup towards the end of his rule. The term 'Baekje Country, Mahan Emperor' sharply illustrates these internal contradictions. Subsequently, Baekje quickly fell into decline. It appears that internal conflicts within Baekje played a more significant role in its downfall than the attacks by the Tang and Silla alliance. More detailed research on this topic is warranted in the future.

The Mahan-Baekje, built over thousands of years by the Yue Zhi and Osun factions, collapsed due to unresolved centralization issues. When Mahan-Baekje fell, the Yue Zhi tribe was not located in the Yeongsan River region but in the Sabi region of Buyeo. All these facts clearly demonstrate that Mahan and Baekje were essentially the same entity under different names.

## Abbreviations

HTK: History of the Three Kingdoms  
 RTK: Records of the Three Kingdoms  
 BLH: Book of the Later Han  
 HRJ: History Records of Japan(Nihon Shoki)  
 HS: Hanseong Shipje (ten tribes)  
 BOL: Book of Liang

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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