

## Mongol Cultural Influence in the Late Koryô Period

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### INTRODUCTION

In the thirteenth century, the Mongols conquered most of the Eurasian continent and built the greatest land empire in world history. The conquest and empire-building were accompanied by enormous destruction of life and property, but once the peace known as the *Pax Mongolica* prevailed, there was an unprecedented opportunity for open and free exchange of peoples, ideas, and commodities. The politically unified empire brought together many ethnic groups under a single political entity, and promoted diffusion of various cultures across Asia. As the rulers of the empire, Mongols made great cultural impact on conquered peoples. Even the Chinese, who have consistently discounted foreign influence and emphasized sinicization, were in fact heavily impacted by the Mongol rule.<sup>1</sup>

Among the states that had existed in Northeast Asian continent in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, only the kingdom of Koryô was able to survive and maintain its autonomy. Koryô was still subjected to intrusive Mongol political influence for a century. Koryô had been a “vassal state” to the Chinese and Manchurian imperial dynasties only nominally, but the Mongol control of Koryô was strong and comprehensive. Koryô became a son-in-law state as Koryô kings were forced to take Mongol princesses as their primary consorts.

Under the Mongol hegemony, Koryô enjoyed a relative peace. With vigorous cultural exchanges with the outside world, Koryô was also impacted by the Mongol culture and custom. Using the *Koryôsa* (History of the Koryô Dynasty) as the basic source,<sup>2</sup> this paper

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of the Mongol cultural influence in China, see Henry Serruys, “Remains of Mongol Customs in China during the Early Ming,” 137-90.

<sup>2</sup> While it has many shortcomings, the *Koryôsa* remains the most comprehensive and often the only source on the Koryô period. For the discussion of the strong and weak points of *Koryôsa*, see Pyôn T’aesôp, “*Koryôsa*” *ûi yôn’gu*, 214-223.

will present a few examples of the Mongol cultural influence at the Koryô court and the popularization of Mongol language and customs.

### I. Royal Inter marriages and Mongol Culture at the Koryô Court

Koryô resisted Mongol invasion for three decades and suffered terribly in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Peace and stability came only after its surrender during the reign of King Wônjong (1259-1274). It was the normal Mongol policy to keep surrendered local rulers in power, and the Mongol court neither forced a major overhaul of Koryô political institutions nor purged the Koryô royal family or large numbers of the Koryô aristocracy.

The close political ties between the Yuan and Koryô courts were formally forged by the successive inter marriages between Koryô kings and Mongol princesses, establishing Koryô as the son-in-law state (pumaguk 駙馬國). This inter marriage between the two courts began when King Wônjong proposed marriage between his son, who later became King Ch'ungnyôl, and the Cheguk Princess, daughter of the Mongol Khan Kubilai.<sup>3</sup> Until the end of the Mongol domination, all Koryô kings who reached maturity took Mongol princesses as their primary consorts, and princes born of Mongol princess had the priority in the succession to the Koryô throne. The successive inter marriages of Koryô kings and Mongol princesses were unique and extraordinary events in Korean history as there had not a single inter marriage between Korean and foreign dynasties prior and after the period of Mongol Interference.<sup>4</sup>

It has been suggested that the Koryô kingship changed fundamentally after its surrender to the Mongols, and that all kings after King Ch'ungsôn should be classified as the Mongol line of Koryô kings.<sup>5</sup> In fact, percentages of Mongol blood among the Koryô kings were, one-half for King Ch'ungsôn, three-fourth for King Ch'ungsuk, three-eighth for Kings Ch'unghye and Kongmin, eleven-sixteenth for King Ch'ungmok, and three-sixteenth for King Ch'ungjông.

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<sup>3</sup> King Wônjong was perhaps trying to strengthen the royal power by borrowing the prestige and power of the Yuan court. The reality of his weak position was painfully clear when the king himself was dethroned in 1269. On the other hand, the Kubilai Khan accepted the marriage proposal to fortify its control over the Koryô, and to enlist more active assistance from Koryô in his planned conquest of Japan.

<sup>4</sup> While there was an attempt to arrange a marriage between the Korean heir-apparent to the throne and a princess of the Ming imperial family in the early Chosôn, it failed to materialize (*T'aejo sillok*, 13:32b15-34a13).

In cultural and ethnic aspects, Koryô kings were as Mongol as they were Korean, and it is not surprising that their behavior would reflect the cultural preference of Mongol elites. Koryô kings who grew up in Khanbaliq would be at ease with the Mongol customs. This acceptance and popularity of the Mongol culture was a new development in Koryô as the nomadic customs had been looked down and rejected. King T'aejo, the founder of the dynasty, had admonished his successors not to copy dresses and institutions of both the Chinese and Khitans.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the popularization of Mongol customs at the Koryô court in was closely related to the changed nature of the kingship in the thirteenth century.

One clear example of such Mongol culture at the Koryô court is the royal personal preference for hunting and infatuation with the sport of falconry. The falconry was one of the favorite sports of the Mongol imperial family, and the court established a special agency called Ūngbang (Ch. yingfang) to oversee activities concerning falcons.<sup>7</sup> This is in contrast to the earlier Koryô kings who hardly ever went on hunting trips. Moreover, Koryô kings of the period were said to have enjoyed Mongol music (Hoak 胡樂, Ch. Huyue) and dance at their court.<sup>8</sup>

## II. Movements of People

During the war against the Mongol invaders, many Koryô people were captured and taken forcibly to Manchuria and China.<sup>9</sup> In 1254 alone, the Mongols were said to have taken 206,800 Koryô captives and killed innumerable others.<sup>10</sup> In the subsequent period of the *Pax Mongolica*, many Koryô people also moved voluntarily to the Yuan Empire.<sup>11</sup>

From the *Koryôsa* and the *Yuanshi*, we can gain a glimpse of the extent of Koryô population in the Mongol Empire. To suppress the rebellion of Zhang Shicheng in South China, the Mongol chancellor Toghto had requisitioned 2,000 troops including forty generals from

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<sup>5</sup> Chu Ch'aehyôk, "Mongol—Koryôsa yôn'gu ûi chae kômt'o," p. 43

<sup>6</sup> *Koryôsa*, 2:15b4-7.

<sup>7</sup> For a study of the institution of Ūngbang in Koryô, see Naito Shumppo, *Chosen-shi kenkyu*, pp. 319-333.

<sup>8</sup> *Koryôsa*, 43:23a3-4, 134:19a9, 137:11b1, 12a2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Chang Tongik, *Koryô hugi oegyosa yôn'gu*, 149-55.

<sup>10</sup> *Koryôsa*, 24:20a8-b1.

<sup>11</sup> Chang Tongik, *Koryô hugi oegyosa yôn'gu*, 156-85.

Koryô in 1354. It was said that the Koryô troops were joined on the way by more than 20,000 Koryô volunteers living in the capital of Khanbaliq (Dadu 大都).<sup>12</sup> As the number 20,000 indicates only the men capable of serving in the military force, and the total number of Koryô people in the Mongol capital probably reached at least 100,000. In addition, other Koryô nationals settled in great numbers in the Liaoyang region across the northern border of Koryô. The Yuan court would set up a general administrative office for Korean troops and civilians in Shenyang (Shenyang denglu Gaoli junmin congguanfu 瀋陽等路高麗軍民總管府).<sup>13</sup>

Just as many people went out of Koryô, Mongols, Central Eurasians (*semu*), and Chinese came and settled in Koryô. Indeed, in both the quantitative and qualitative sense the presence of foreigners in the Koryô ruling stratum during the period of Mongol domination was truly unparalleled in Korean history.<sup>14</sup> The most prominent foreigners in the Koryô society were of course the Mongol princesses married to Koryô kings and their private retainers (*qieliangkou* 怯憐口).<sup>15</sup> Others were officials sent by the Yuan court such as *daruhachi*<sup>16</sup> and those attached to the military colonies established in various parts of Koryô. There were no doubt many others who crossed the boundary between the two states, and along with the people came their languages, customs and ideas, and the unprecedented movement of people contributed to popularization of Mongol customs in Koryô.

### III. Popularization of Mongol Language and Customs

#### 1. Mongol Language

The Mongols were ethnically, culturally, and linguistically different from the Han Chinese, and they not only refused to adopt the Chinese ways but also imposed a strict discriminatory ethnic classification system that divided the population into four separate ethnic groups based

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<sup>12</sup> *Koryôsa chôryô*, 26:24b8-25a4, 27a8-b1.

<sup>13</sup> *Yuanshi*, 63.1562.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Yun, "Mongols and Western Asians in the Late Koryô Ruling Stratum," 51-69.

<sup>15</sup> The *qieliangkou* is a Chinese transcription of Mongolian *ger-in k'e'ü*, which literally means "sons of the yurt." This term was used to designate slaves employed as artisans or family attendants of the imperial and noble families (Hsiao Ch'i-ch'ing, *Military Establishment*, 199. n 312).

on a combination of ethnic and political considerations: the Mongols, the *semu*, *hanren* (people of Northern China who had been under the rule of the Jurchen Jin) and *nanren* (the people who had been ruled by the Southern Song and brought into the new Mongol Empire in 1279).<sup>17</sup> Although there is no conclusive proof that the ethnic classifications were rigorously enforced, the system had important implications when it came to privileges, penal law, appointments and taxation. For example, the law specified that only the Mongols and the *semu* could serve as the *daruhachi*, and when exercising the *yin* 蔭 (protected appointment) privilege, the *semu* received official posts one grade higher than did Han Chinese.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, when the government service examination system resumed in 1315, the Chinese were given more difficult exams and allotted only one half of the available posts, even though they numbered more than 97% of the total population.<sup>19</sup>

As the Mongols constituted in the upper class and enjoyed great advantage in the government service, their language enjoyed a great prestige as the official language of a world empire.<sup>20</sup> As the favored group in the empire, there was little incentive for the Mongols and the *semu* to become more like Chinese, but many non-Mongols would try to pass for Mongols in order to obtain some of the advantages and privileges reserved for the Mongols.

The Yuan court not only did not promote acculturation attempts but also issued formal orders that specifically prohibited the *hanren* and *nanren* (i.e., the Han Chinese) from studying the Mongol and Uighur scripts.<sup>21</sup> However, this prohibition of the study of Mongol language and script did not seem to have applied to the Koryô people. Although Koreans were nominally included in the *hanren* category, many rules and regulation such as those in the *Yuan dianzhang*,<sup>22</sup> unmistakably show that the Koryô people constituted a separate category along

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<sup>16</sup> The *daruhachi* literally means the “one who presses” [a seal]. From this it came to mean the head official (*Yuan shih*, 6.106, 13.268).

<sup>17</sup> Meng Siming, *Yuandai shehui jieji zhidu*, 25-36; Elizabeth Endicott-West, “The Yüan Government and Society,” 610.

<sup>18</sup> *Yuanshi*, 30.432

<sup>19</sup> It was estimated that in 1290 there were about 1 million Mongols, 1 million *semu*, 10 million Hanren, and 60 million Nanren in the Yuan empire (Murakami Masatsugu 村上正二, *Chugoku no rekishi 6: Yuboku minzoku kokka: Gen* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977). Thus, the Mongols and the *semu* together comprised less than 3% of total population.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Serruys, *Sino-Mongol Relations during the Ming II*, 139-42.

<sup>21</sup> *Yuanshi*, 39.839, 182.4202.

<sup>22</sup> The *Yuan dianzhang* (Institutions of the Yuan dynasty) is a very important source for the legal and social study of the Mongol period in China. Unfortunately, due to a “strange” grammar that used the vocabulary of thirteenth and fourteenth century colloquial Chinese to render literally Mongol words and word order, it has not

with the *semu*, *haner* 漢兒 (*hanren*), and *manzi* 蠻子 (*nanren*). It appears that the Koryô people were at times accorded the same rights as the *semu*, and at other times treated as the *hanren*.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the imperial decrees of the period did not always use the term *hanren* to automatically include the people of Koryô but specifically mentioned them by name. Thus, the *Yuanshi* entries for the fourth month of 1337 include a decree that forbade the *hanren*, *nanren*, and *Gaoliren* 高麗人 (Koryô people) from maintaining military weapons, but another decree issued in the same month mentioned only *hanren* and *nanren* as the ones who were prohibited from study of Mongol and the *semu* scripts.<sup>24</sup>

The prestige of the Mongol culture and language was most evident in the widespread use of Mongol names. Every Koryô king from King Ch'ungsôn to King Kongmin all had Mongol names, and other Koreans with such Mongol names as Batur 拔都 (“warrior”), Temür 帖木兒 (“iron”), and Bukha 不花 (“bull”) appear frequently in the *Koryôsa*.<sup>25</sup> It was well known that the boyhood name of the famous Koryô general An U 安祐 (died 1362) was the very popular Mongol name Batur.<sup>26</sup> This popularity of Mongol names was not a unique phenomenon in Koryô. The Han Chinese also changed “their surnames for barbarian names, and learned the barbarian language and (observed) their customs.”<sup>27</sup>

At the Koryô court, the ability to speak the Mongol language was obviously a great political asset. In dealing with the Mongols, the court needed someone who was fluent in the Mongol language and culture and thus be familiar with the political situation at Khanbaliq. Several Koryô persons became fluent in Mongol language and rose to high positions thanks to their linguistic abilities. One of the most successful was Cho In'gyu of the P'yôngyang Cho family. Cho came from a minor provincial family, but his fluency in the Mongol language enabled him to attain political and social prominence.<sup>28</sup>

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been utilized to its full potential. See Lien-sheng Yang, “Marginalia to the *Yuan tien-chang*,” 126-135 and Tanaka Kenji, “Gentensho ni okeru mobun chokuyakutai,” 47-161.

<sup>23</sup> Chang Tongik, *Koryô hugi oegyosa yôn'gu*, 175.

<sup>24</sup> *Yuanshi*, 39.839.

<sup>25</sup> For a few examples, see *Koryôsa*, 35:29b4, 36:9a9, 36:28b2, 42:1b1.

<sup>26</sup> *Koryôsa*, 113:1a5.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Henry Serruys, “Remains of Mongol Customs,” 153; *Hongwu shilu*, 26:11b.

<sup>28</sup> For a case study of the P'yôngyang Cho family, see Min Hyôn'gu, “Cho In'gyu wa kû ûi kamun.”

Many Mongol vocabularies entered the Korean language during this time.<sup>29</sup> A number of official titles were adopted directly from the Mongolian language such as *daruhachi*<sup>30</sup> and *bicigci* 必闍赤 (Ch. pi-she-ch'ih, "secretary").<sup>31</sup> We even have an instance of a Mongol word combined with a Korean word as in "Aji Paldo 阿只拔都" recorded in the *Koryôsa*. This was the term used to describe a young leader of the Japanese pirates and it has been discussed by many scholars.<sup>32</sup> Here "Aji" (or "Agi") was Korean word meaning a child [or a young person] and "Paldo" [Mo. Batur] was Mongol word for a warrior. Although some have tried to connect "Aji" to the Mongol word "aqa" (elder brother), many scholars lean toward the reading of the term as Korean word "Agi" (child or boy).<sup>33</sup> Many of the Mongol terms adopted into Korean language would be related to military affairs, horses, and falcons.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. Mongol Hair and Clothing Styles

One of the most visible Mongol cultural influences in Koryô was in the hair style and clothing. Again, this was not a phenomenon restricted to Korea but found all over the empire. It was said that Chinese "officials and commoners all braided their hair and wore plaits."<sup>35</sup> Imposition of one's hair-do on conquered people has been one of the features of the nomadic people. The Jurchens of the Jin dynasty had unsuccessfully tried to enforce their hair and clothing style on the Han Chinese in the twelfth century,<sup>36</sup> but five centuries later the Manchus of the Qing Empire did succeed in forcing the Chinese to acknowledge their rule by conforming to the Manchu hair style. However, even as the Mongols imposed their hair style on a few Turkic tribes, they did not force it on Koryô, China and many other conquered peoples. Therefore, it seems that adoption of the Mongol hair style in Koryô was voluntary.

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<sup>29</sup> Kim Yôngil, "Uri man sok ûi Mongolô yoso," 111-125.

<sup>30</sup> *KS*, 24/11a4, 65/11a3.

<sup>31</sup> *KS*, 26/12a6, 75/3a2.

<sup>32</sup> Yi Kimun, *Kugôsa kaesôl*, 101; Kim Sanggi, *Sinp'yôn Koryô sidaesa*, 561.

<sup>33</sup> Karl Krippes, "Mongol and Jurchen," 100.

<sup>34</sup> For a complete list of Mongol terms in *KS*, see Shiratori Kurakichi, "Korai shi ni miataru Mongorugo no kaishaku," 393-484. See also Song Kijung, "*T'aejo sillok e tûngjang hanun Monggoô myông kwa Yôjinô myông.*"

<sup>35</sup> Henry Serruys, "Remains of Mongol Customs in China during the Early Ming," 137-90.

<sup>36</sup> Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6, 281.

It was said that when King Ch'ungnyôl came to the throne in 1274, the king and many of his officials had already adopted Mongol hair style and clothing.<sup>37</sup> Four years later in 1278, the king officially ordered all Koryô officials to wear the Mongol style cap and hair style.<sup>38</sup> Indications are that everyone in Koryô down to the lowest official donned the Mongol hair style for almost the next one hundred years, and it was only in 1374, six years after the Mongols had been pushed out of Khanbaliq and the China Proper, when the royal order prohibiting Mongol hair style was issued in Koryô.<sup>39</sup> However, even after the court's order, many seemed to have continued to follow the Mongol style. The continued practice of Mongol style would prompt another decree of prohibition from the Koryô court twelve years later in 1388.<sup>40</sup>

The Mongol clothing was also adopted extensively in Koryô. King Ch'ungnyôl ordered all to wear the hat and clothing of the Yuan style in 1278,<sup>41</sup> and it was in 1370, almost a century later, when the Ming emperor sent Ming palace uniforms.<sup>42</sup> This did not lead to a rejection of Mongol clothing at the court immediately, and more than a decade and half later 1386, the Koryô court still had not discarded its Mongol clothing.<sup>43</sup> In 1387, a Koryô envoy came back from Ming China wearing the Chinese style hat and clothing, and the court promulgated a new regulation requiring Ming style cap and clothing for court officials, and finally abolished the Yuan style clothing.<sup>44</sup> Even though government officials were no longer dressed in the Yuan fashion, it was said that many others continued to wear the Yuan clothing in Koryô.<sup>45</sup> In fact, King U and his attendants were said to have continued to wear the Mongol clothing.<sup>46</sup>

There is an interesting case of switches between the Mongol and Chinese clothing styles in the late Koryô that reflect a close connection between diplomatic and cultural policies. When the court took "pro-Ming" or "anti-Yuan" policy, it adopted Ming style clothing and prohibited use of Yuan clothing. When pro-Yuan faction was in power, however, the reverse

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<sup>37</sup> *Koryôsa*, 28:4a8-b2.

<sup>38</sup> *Koryôsa*, 72: 11b3-5.

<sup>39</sup> *Koryôsa*, 85:20a7-8.

<sup>40</sup> *Koryôsa*, 85:21a5-6.

<sup>41</sup> *Koryôsa*, 85:13b5.

<sup>42</sup> *Koryôsa*, 72:8a2-4.

<sup>43</sup> *Koryôsa*, 136:10b5-6.

<sup>44</sup> *Koryôsa*, 72:13a1, 136: 24b4-5, 25a2-3.

<sup>45</sup> *Koryôsa*, 136:23b5.

<sup>46</sup> *Koryôsa*, 136:25a4-5, 26b2-4.

happened. Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming dynasty, was highly suspicious of Koryô's intentions regarding Ming and the Northern Yuan (北元 Puk Wôn, Ch. Bei Yuan). In the 1380s, Zhu provoked Koryô by announcing his intention to take over the northern part of Korean peninsula that Koryô had recovered by force only recently. As the relation between two countries deteriorated rapidly, Koryô decided to strike first by launching a military expedition to Liaodong. In 1388, just before the start of the Liaodong expedition, the king abolished the Ming regnal title of *Hongwu* and ordered all officials to once again wear the Yuan style clothing that was abolished only in the previous year.<sup>47</sup> It was said that even before the royal decree was issued, many people of the capital city of Kaegyông were already wearing their hair and clothing in the Yuan style.<sup>48</sup> This suggests that many in Koryô had never really switched to the Ming or “Chinese” style clothing. However, General Yi Sônggye soon engineered a coup and forced out King U from the throne, and the policy was again reversed and the Yuan clothing, at least at the court, was discarded.<sup>49</sup>

The majority of Koryô people must have followed the Mongol clothing and hair styles in the late Koryô period. Otherwise, it would not have elicited the royal decree if only a few had worn the Mongol style clothing and hair style. Perhaps the people of Koryô may not have considered the Yuan clothing and hair style as “foreign” after having used them for almost a century.

It was only at the very end of the Koryô dynasty when a Han Chinese refugee named Yi Mindo designed new clothing style based on the Chinese design in 1390.<sup>50</sup> Yet, even after the establishment of the Chosôn dynasty, that espoused strong pro-Ming and anti-Yuan stance, the Mongol or “barbarian” style clothing appears to have persisted at least until the middle of the fifteenth century. At the court discussion in the second year (1454) of King Tanjong's reign, it was stated that people of the time followed the style of “barbarian” [Mongol] clothing (胡服) style.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Koryôsa*, 137:7b9-8a1.

<sup>48</sup> *Koryôsa*, 137:8a4, 11b3-4.

<sup>49</sup> *Koryôsa*, 137:19b8-9.

<sup>50</sup> *Koryôsa*, 72:19b3-4. Yi Mindo was originally from Hebei province (*T'aejo sillok*, 7:6b10). Yi later became a second grade dynastic-foundation merit subject of Chosôn and was enfeoffed as the Lord of Sangsan (*T'aejo sillok*, 7:6b10, 7a1).

<sup>51</sup> *Tanjong sillok*, 10 (2.1.1.kyech'uk).

### 3. The Levirate and Polygyny

In their marriage custom, the Mongols observed the first and second degrees of consanguinity but observed no degree of affinity.<sup>52</sup> Thus, it was the general custom of Mongols to marry any of their relations except one's mother, daughter, and sister by the same mother.<sup>53</sup> From the Confucian moral standpoint, one of the most repulsive Mongol or nomadic customs was the levirate in which a man married the widow of an older male relative, most often his brother or even father. Leviratic marriages were not unknown in ancient Korean history as they had been practiced in Puyô and Koguryô,<sup>54</sup> but they were no longer practiced and unlawful during the Koryô period. Thus, the appearance of the levirate at the Koryô court in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century must have been influenced by the Mongol custom.

One clear example of the levirate in Koryô is King Ch'ungsôn and Sukpi 淑妃. Ch'ungsôn, after killing a favorite of King Ch'ungnyôl, had a widow from the Ônyang Kim family serve Ch'ungnyôl, who made her one of his royal consorts as the Sukch'angwônbi 淑昌院妃. However, after the death of Ch'ungnyôl, Ch'ungsôn took his father's consort as his own with the title of Sukpi 淑妃.<sup>55</sup> The *Koryôsa* strongly disapproved King Ch'ungsôn's conduct, but it must be noted that such censure came from the Confucian morality of the Early Chosôn. From the Mongol cultural perspective, King Ch'ungsôn was well within the bounds of his rights and propriety.

Historical records are silent on the extent of the practice of the levirate in Koryô. Confucian morality may have precluded popularity of the Mongol marriage custom in Koryô, but there were numerous cases of Han Chinese adopting the practice during the Yuan period,<sup>56</sup> even after the Yuan court issued an order prohibiting the levirate among the *hanren* and *nanren* in 1331.<sup>57</sup> It is not clear if this order also applied to the Koryô people, but one cannot say for sure that the levirate was an anomaly in Koryô.

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<sup>52</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, 104.

<sup>53</sup> Henry Serruys, *Mongols and Ming China, II*, 172.

<sup>54</sup> No T'aedon, "Koguryô ch'ogi ùi chwisuhon," 85-86.

<sup>55</sup> *Koryôsa*, 89:12a9-b6.

<sup>56</sup> Bettine Birge, *Women, Property, and Confucian Reaction*, 238-53.

Beside the levirate, it has also been suggested that the appearance of polygamy in the late Koryô period was a result of the Mongol influence.<sup>58</sup> The Mongols often had multiple wives. For example, a medieval eyewitness account by William of Rubruck reported that Batu, the commander of the Mongol army in the West, had 26 wives and Sartach, another Mongol commander, had 6 wives.<sup>59</sup> Previously Koryô aristocrats practiced monogamy,<sup>60</sup> but cases of Koryô men taking multiple wives increased during the Mongol period. During the reign of King Ch'ungnyôl, an official even suggested that the court promote and sanction the practice of taking multiple wives.<sup>61</sup> While the proposal was rejected because of bitter opposition by angry wives of government officials at the time, it reflects the trend toward the social acceptance of polygynous marriages in the late Koryô period.

## CONCLUSION

There is little evidence that the Mongols forced their nomadic culture and tribal customs on Koryô. In fact, the Kubilai Khan explicitly promised to allow Koryô to keep its tradition and custom, and the Khan's promise was often cited by Koryô to resist the later Mongol attempts to impose changes. Thus, popularization of the Mongol culture and custom in Koryô was mostly due to people's eagerness to take advantage of the prestige of the Mongol way.

Obviously, Mongol cultural influences were not limited to the few examples discussed in this paper. There are many other instances that suggest Mongol influence. For example, Koryô executed three criminals by pressing them with stones in 1343, and this method of execution of prisoners and criminals was apparently a Mongol custom.<sup>62</sup> There were also institutional changes such as the primacy of the minister of the Right at the court of King Ch'ungnyôl.<sup>63</sup> Prior to this period, the Left minister had always been superior to the Right minister, but the court now adopted the Mongol system. Unfortunately, the paucity and episodic nature of historical records make it difficult to assess the scale of the Mongol cultural influence on the

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<sup>57</sup> *Yuanshi*, 103:2644.

<sup>58</sup> Kwôn Sunhyông, *Koryô ûi honinje wa yôsông ûi sam*, 129.

<sup>59</sup> Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia*, 95, 117.

<sup>60</sup> See Chang Pyôngin, "Koryô sidae honinje e taehan chae kômt'o," 1-30.

<sup>61</sup> *Koryôsa*, 106:40a7-b6.

<sup>62</sup> *Koryôsa*, 36:29b3; Cf. Boyle, *Successors*, 201.

<sup>63</sup> *Koryôsa*, 30:30a1.

Koryô society. Finally, while Koryô did adopt many aspects of the Mongolian culture, there were also some attempts to preserve Koryô's own tradition.<sup>64</sup>

Mongol cultural influence in Korea appears to have declined after the dynastic change of 1392 that saw the establishment of the Chosôn state. However, the legacy of the Mongol culture in modern Korean language and customs cannot be ignored. Perhaps the Mongol cultural elements have been so thoroughly internalized in the last six hundred years that few Koreans consider them as “foreign,” let alone be able to recognize them. In the end, these examples of Mongol cultural influence in the late Koryô period remind us of just how much Koryô was incorporated into the Mongol world empire in cultural as much as political sense.

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<sup>64</sup> Naito Shumpo, *Chosen shi kenkyu*, 91.

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