

Special Feature

Changes in the Perception of Baekdusan during the Late Period of Joseon

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Introduction

Baekdusan is an entity which carries with it a very special meaning for Koreans. The unique standing of this mountain in the hearts of Koreans cannot be solely explained by superficial factors such as Baekdusan's status as the highest mountain on the Korean peninsula, or its historical—as well as current—inaccessibility. Rather, many Koreans perceive Baekdusan as the point from which Korean history flows and the peninsula's mountains and rivers begin. In addition, they also understand it to be a symbol of the Korean nation's glory and ordeals. Moreover, the National Anthem of South Korea begins with the phrase “The East Sea and Baekdusan.” However, the fact that similar wording had already appeared in the *Chanmiga* composed in 1905 lends itself to the conclusion that such an expression was already in use well before this time (No 1994).

In 1903, Emperor Gojong of the Daehan Empire designated Baekdusan as one of the five national mountains in which the ritual ceremonies conducted by the Son of Heaven (*cheonja*) were to be implemented. A few years later, Na Cheol, the founder of the *Dangungyo* (Dangun religion) which sought to transform the founder of the Korean nation into a universally-worshipped religious figure, also began to carry out ritual ceremonies to the heavens in Baekdusan (Yi 2006). These examples prove that in the modern era Baekdusan was regarded as a key item of worship by Korean religions rooted in the notions of national power and nationalism. However, the symbolism of Baekdusan cannot be said to have instantly formed during this period.

This study analyzes the changes in the perceptions of Baekdusan that occurred during the Joseon period that immediately precede the modern era. Previous studies which have dealt with Baekdusan during the Joseon era have for the most part focused on the background and process through which the Baekdusan boundary stone (*jeonggyebi*) was erected rather than on the mountain in and of itself. In this regard, the establishment of the border between Joseon and Qing and the Kando (Chientao) problem proved to be the main areas of interest amongst the general public and scholars alike.

The location of the Tomun River became a source of disagreement

during both the period in which the Baekdusan boundary stone was erected and during the territorial negotiations that took place between Joseon and Qing during the reign of King Gojong. However, both sides refrained from taking any concrete steps towards changing the status of Baekdusan, which had long been perceived as the point of origin of both of these rivers. The fact that Baekdusan abutted both Joseon and Qing, and that both sides had created various oral tales and histories that were rooted in this mountain, could very well have resulted in making the latter another source of discord between these two nations. In the case of Joseon, the general awareness of Baekdusan, as well as the desire to investigate the mountain intellectually and experience it directly, was greatly strengthened in the aftermath of the erection of the Baekdusan boundary stone. To this end, this study seeks to analyze the changes that took place in the perception of Baekdusan during the Joseon era, as well as the general spread of this awareness during this period. Such an endeavor is expected to help foster a better understanding of the increased symbolism of Baekdusan in the modern era.

Changes in the Notion of Jurisdiction

The first agreement to have the Amnok (Yalu) and Tomun (Tumen) Rivers serve as the border between Joseon and Qing occurred in 1712 (38th year of King Sukjong). Although the exact location of the Tomun River was a subject of dispute between the two countries until the end of the Daehan Empire, the establishment of an actual border between Joseon and Qing proved to be an epochal event. Before the reaching of this agreement, the two countries had never had clearly demarcated borders; rather, the border was perceived as a space that was in a state of constant flux. Furthermore, the Baekdusan area had long fallen within the sphere of influence of the Jurchens. However, the steady splintering of the Jurchens during the period between the collapse of the Jin (金) dynasty in 1234 and the rise of Later Jin (後金) in 1616, events that occurred amidst Yuan and Ming domination of Central China, inevitably resulted in ensuring that the Baekdusan area was in a constant state of flux.

Joseon can be said to have possessed two intersecting perceptions of Baekdusan. One was the notion of the mountain as an ancestral entity that

emerged as part of the growing popularity of geomancy during the Goryeo era (Song 2007:138). This perception of Baekdusan as the progenitor of the Korean peninsula's mountains and rivers continued during the Joseon era. However, this perception was not directly related to the issue of ownership of Baekdusan. To this end, the concept of Joseon's ownership of Baekdusan can be regarded as the second of the above-mentioned perceptions.

In fact, Baekdusan was perceived in some quarters as not being part of the national territory during the early Joseon era. Here, territory was understood to be demarcated by the administrative districts or military facilities under one's control rather than by the type of fixed borders we now have today. In this regard, Baekdusan was a space which was both hard to access and to reside in. Moreover, the Baekdusan area was also home to a scattering of bases occupied by the stateless Jurchens. Therefore, Baekdusan could hardly be regarded as fully part of the territory of Joseon as long as Joseon villages had not taken root in the area north of Baekdusan.

While the notion of Baekdusan as Korea's ancestral mountain survived well into the modern era after having gone through late Joseon (Yang 1996), the perception of the ownership of the mountain underwent many changes based on the international and domestic conditions surrounding Joseon. While Joseon traditionally regarded the Jurchens who resided in the border area and provided tributes as *beonho* (藩胡) chieftains, those who resided to the north of Baekdusan were identified as *simcheoho* (深處胡) chieftains (*Sunjo sujeong sillok* 1583:16/02/01)¹. During the process that led to the foundation of the Qing dynasty, Nurhaci relocated all *fanhu* chieftains to the area north of Baekdusan. As a result, the Jurchens who had resided south of Baekdusan effectively left the area.

This denouement marked a clear change in the environment surrounding Baekdusan. To begin with, the Jurchens were no longer a smattering of villages, but a full-fledged nation that faced off against Joseon across Baekdusan. As the two countries increasingly clashed over the exact location of the border, the perception eventually developed that while the area south of Baekdusan belonged to Joseon, that which lay north of the great

1. Digitized records of kings will be indicated as follows: name of the text, followed by reign year/month/day.

mountain was the domain of the Jurchens. The thinking in Joseon that Qing could also lay claim to the area south of Baekdusan should Qing power in Central China collapse and the latter be forced to return to its original base was based on an awareness that this area south of Baekdusan belonged to Joseon.

Therefore, Joseon's main concern during the early stages of the process of establishing the Baekdusan boundary stone, a process which began during the reign of King Sukjong, was that of securing the southern part of Baekdusan. The closest Joseon military outpost at the time was far away from the southern reaches of Baekdusan, and difficult accessibility meant that no Joseon people resided in the area. Joseon's worries were further compounded by the fact that the *Da Ming Yi Tong Zhi* (大明一統志, Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Ming) had identified Baekdusan as belonging to the Jurchens, and that a number of Jurchens continued to reside in the area south of Baekdusan (*Bibyeonsa deungnok* 6:369a). To this end, Joseon was concerned that Qing would eventually seek to assert sovereignty over the entire Baekdusan area.

Joseon's response to this matter was to use Qing's own records as a means to bring pressure to bear on the latter. Qing's *Shenjing tongzhi* (盛京通志, Cohesive History of Shenjing) identified the area south of Baekdusan as part of the territory of Joseon, and Baekdusan's Cheonji (Heavenly) Lake as the point of origin of the Amnok (Yalu) and Tomun Rivers. Thus, based on these records, the area south of Baekdusan inevitably belonged to Joseon. However, the Qing government's prohibition of the distribution of the *Shenjing tongzhi* rendered it difficult for Joseon to stake its claim based on the logic presented in this book. In the end, Joseon adopted a strategy to secure this area that was based on the claim that Joseon's border with Qing spanned from the starting point of the Amnok (Yalu) and Tomun Rivers to the lower reaches of these two rivers (*Bibyeonsa deungnok* 6:374d).

However, despite Joseon's concerns, the issue proved to be initially much easier to resolve than expected. When Joseon's interpreter Kim Jinam asked Qing's Commander-in-Chief Mu Kedeng, who was in charge of surveying the upper reaches of the two rivers, to provide him with a map of Baekdusan, the latter allegedly replied that while he could not hand over a map of Qing's mountains and rivers, he saw no problem in providing Kim with a map of Baekdusan, an area which he identified as falling within

the territory of Joseon (*Sukjong sillok* 1712:38/5/15; Kim 1998:102). Although Mu Kedeng's exact words may be up for interpretation, Joseon used this incident as an opportunity to secure control over the area south of Baekdusan. From that point onwards, the movement towards erecting the Baekdusan boundary stone focused on ensuring the exact origin of these two rivers.

The process used to identify the point of origin of these two rivers was based on a suggestion put forward by Mu Kedeng, namely that the boundary stone be erected approximately 10-*ri* to the southeast of Cheonji Lake. The exact location of the Tomun River, which was at this time established as the eastern border between the two nations, became an issue not only during this period, but also during the territorial negotiations between the two sides held during the reign of King Gojong. The location of this boundary stone also had an impact on the issue of who had jurisdiction over Baekdusan. More to the point, if the location in which this boundary stone was erected was in fact considered to be the boundary marker, then Joseon could claim sovereignty over the area south of Baekdusan, or from military outposts in Hamgyeong Province to the spot in which the Baekdusan boundary stone was established. This was in fact the area that the Joseon government had sought to secure during the process of establishing this boundary stone.

However, in this case, Baekdusan's peak and Cheonji Lake, both of which were located north of the boundary stone, inevitably fell outside of the territory of Joseon. In fact, even before the establishment of the boundary stone, there was a widespread perception in Joseon that the border with Qing should begin at Baekdusan's Cheonji Lake. During the reign of King Sukjong, Nam Guman argued that the Amnok (Yalu) and Duman (Tumen) Rivers, which originated from the peaks of Baekdusan and flowed east and west respectively, should be regarded as the border of Joseon (*Sukjong sillok* 1697:23/3/18). The Joseon side put forward this assertion during the process of erecting the boundary stone. Had this come to pass, the halfway point of Cheonji Lake would have in the strict sense of the word served as the border which demarcated Baekdusan.

However, the creation of a border by partitioning Cheonji Lake was not a feasible endeavor. This can be regarded as the main reason why the Joseon interpreter Kim Jinam claimed during his talks with Mu Kedeng that

while the two rivers originated from Cheonji Lake, Joseon's border should be established in the area south of the lake (*Sukjong sillok* 1712:38/5/5). Furthermore, having secured its sovereignty over the south of Baekdusan, Joseon refrained from initiating any further arguments over Baekdusan and the location of the boundary stone, which, in the end, was unilaterally established by Mu Kedeng.

Joseon did not regard the location of the boundary stone as an absolute sign of who had sovereignty over Baekdusan. Rather, the perception that the Amnok and Tomun (or Duman) Rivers originated from Cheonji Lake continued to hold sway within Joseon even after the establishment of the boundary stone (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 40:35b). The map of Baekdusan provided by Mu Kedeng after the establishment of the boundary stone also identified the streams that eventually became the Amnok and Tomun Rivers as having their origins in Baekdusan's Cheonji Lake (*Baekdusan jeonggyebi do* 1712; *Sukjong sillok* 1712:38/6/10). As such, there remained some ambiguity as to whether Cheonji Lake, which was perceived by both sides as the point of origin of these two rivers, was the actual border, or whether the location of the boundary stone erected by Mu Kedeng was the *de facto* border.

While the former case had the symbolic effect of placing only a part of Baekdusan's peak and Cheonji Lake within its territory, Joseon did not perceive this aspect of the location of the boundary stone as being problematic. The period that immediately followed the establishment of the boundary stone was one in which two different opinions emerged within Joseon. More to the point, while one camp chastised the government for having ceded an area of 700-*ri* northeast of Baekdusan to China, the other argued that in fact not much had been lost as the area around the Tomun River was for all intents and purposes wasteland (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 51:8b; 54:173a). Thus, we can surmise that at this juncture actual sovereignty over Baekdusan's peak, which was regarded as being of symbolic value rather than any concrete one, was not yet a major concern within Joseon.

Nevertheless, the erection of the boundary stone was not regarded within Joseon as a clear sign that the latter no longer had a claim to the area north of Baekdusan. Rather, the general perception at the time was that while the actual origins of these two rivers could be traced back to Cheonji Lake, the boundary stone had merely been erected at the spot where the

two rivers were divided. To this end, Hong Chijung, a government official who held the position of *Bugyori*, climbed Baekdusan the year following the establishment of the boundary stone to ascertain the actual situation on the ground (*Sukjong sillok* 1713:39/1/22). During the reign of King Yeongjo, many other officials, including Hong Gyehei, also climbed Baekdusan to assess the state of affairs in the area (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 51:877c). These trips by officials to the top of Baekdusan would have not been possible had Joseon in fact perceived the summit of Baekdusan as belonging to Qing following the establishment of the boundary stone. As such, Joseon did not link the location of the boundary stone to the issue of sovereignty over Baekdusan.

On the contrary, Joseon's interest in Baekdusan actually increased over time. In this regard, *Jwauijeong* (Second State Councilor) Song Inmyeong stated that while Baekdusan had originally belonged to the Jurchens, it now belonged to Joseon (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 54:783c). For his part, Han Ikmo, who held the position of *Yejo Panseo* (Minister of Rites) argued in 1761 (37th year of King Yeongjo) that the origins of Joseon's royal family could be traced back to Baekdusan. More to the point, Han asserted that because the ancestors of Joseon's royal family had settled in the northern border area, and all the mountains and rivers in this area originated from Baekdusan, the latter should be considered as the point of origin of Joseon's royal family (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 66:544c). Han's assertions served as the starting point for the debate over the merits of reviving the traditional ritual ceremonies held at Baekdusan.

While the cautious nature of officials resulted in no further steps being taken at that time towards once again beginning to conduct such ritual ceremonies at Baekdusan, the decision was eventually made, after heated discussions amongst government officials, to do so in 1767. The majority of the participants in this process agreed that Baekdusan should be perceived as Korea's ancestral mountain. Nevertheless, no agreement could be reached on the matter of ownership of Baekdusan. Some of the participants even argued that Mu Kedeng's erection of the boundary stone at Bunsuryeong Ridge effectively meant that the area north of Baekdusan no longer belonged to Joseon.

However, many others felt that although Baekdusan served as the border between Joseon and Qing, half of Baekdusan belonged to Joseon (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 70:957f; 71:129e; 71:131d). In other words, Baekdusan

was not monopolized by either one of these countries, but rather jointly owned by the two. This type of reasoning was rooted in the understanding that Baekdusan's Cheonji Lake, from which the Amnok and Tomun Rivers originated, was the actual border between the two dynasties. The growing interest in Baekdusan after the establishment of the boundary stone resulted in the spread of the perception that regardless of the location of the boundary stone, half of Baekdusan belonged to Joseon.

King Yeongjo, who had at been at the forefront of the movement to conduct ritual ceremonies at Baekdusan, went one step further in identifying Baekdusan as the property of Joseon. By categorizing Baekdusan as the point of origin of the Joseon dynasty, King Yeongjo in effect bestowed a great symbolic importance on the mountain. Thus, Joseon not only regarded Baekdusan as the actual border between the two countries, but also as a symbol of the royal family, and as Korea's ancestral mountain.

The notion of Baekdusan as the border between Joseon and Qing continued to hold sway even after the implementation of ritual ceremonies at Baekdusan. On the other hand, the gradual development of the area south of Baekdusan, which had historically been regarded as being of low value, eventually resulted in the building of residential areas further and further north. This development of residential areas was also accompanied by the reorganization of the defensive facilities along the northern border (Go 2005). Thus, Baekdusan was suddenly much more proximate to the people of Joseon. This growing proximity in turn resulted in narrowing the gap between the prevailing perceptions of Baekdusan.

This new reality is also evidenced by a look at the subtle change that took place from the modern era onwards in terms of the notion of ownership of Baekdusan. While the notion that Baekdusan's Cheonji Lake served as the actual geographical border between Joseon and Qing continued to hold sway, more aggressive perceptions also began to emerge. During a meeting held in 1877 on the state of affairs in the border area, members of the *Uijeongbu* (State Council) made reference to the fact that the area north of Baekdusan was adjacent to the border with Qing (*Gojong sillok* 1877:14/3/5). The use of such wordage can be regarded as a sign that Baekdusan, including Cheonji Lake, was now viewed as belonging to Joseon.

To this end, *Yeonguijeong* (Chief State Councilor) Yi Choeung made

references during discussions with the king to ‘our nation’s Baekdu Mountain (我國白頭山)’ (*Gojong sillok* 1880:17/9/8). Similar expressions can also be found in written memorials submitted by other government officials and members of the local literati class (*Gojong sillok* 1884:21/6/17). Thus, a mere century after King Yeongjo had first identified Baekdusan as the point of origin of the royal family, the majority of central government officials and local elites were of the same mindset. As such, regardless of the actual location of the boundary stone, two notions can be said to have coexisted in Joseon. While one argued that Baekdusan was the point where Joseon and Qing came together, the other viewed Baekdusan as the sole possession of Joseon. The former notion emerged as a result of the foundation of Qing. However, the latter gradually took hold after the establishment of the boundary stone and the implementation of ritual ceremonies at Baekdusan, as interest in the mountain and the territory to the north, as well as the development of the surrounding area, progressed.

Implementation of Ritual Ceremonies at Baekdusan

The symbolic and mystical nature of Baekdusan has resulted in the great mountain long being the subject of worship. Although there is no concrete proof that ancient kingdoms engaged in the worship of Baekdusan, evidence has been found which shows that Goryeo and Jin were in fact carrying out such ritual ceremonies by the twelfth century. Although Goryeo and Jin’s practice of worshipping Baekdusan underwent changes because of such factors as internal political shifts and the collapse of dynasties, the general tenets of this custom were passed down to ensuing generations. For its part, Joseon began to conduct ritual ceremonies for Baekdusan shortly after it was founded (*Taejong sillok* 1414:14/8/21).

Joseon’s national rituals were divided into the *daesa* (large-scale rituals), *jungsa* (medium-scale rituals) and *sosa* (small-scale rituals), with the final determination made based on the importance of the subject being worshipped. While the *ak* (mountain), *hae* (sea), and *dok* (river) classified as the country’s main mountains and rivers were governed by the *japsa* (miscellaneous rituals) during the Goryeo period, they were made the subject of the *jungsa* (medium-scale rituals) category following the reorganization

of the *sajeon* (ritual codes) system during the reign of King Taejong of Joseon. Meanwhile, the worship of other famous mountains and rivers was promoted to the status of *sosa* (small-scale rituals) (Han 2002:137). Mount Samgak, Mount Songak, Mount Jiri, and Mount Bibaek were identified as the mountains (*ak*) to be the subject of *jungsa* (medium-scale rituals). In this regard, the latter, Mount Bibaek, was preferred to Baekdusan as the representative mountain for the northern area (*bukak*) during early Joseon.

The mountains falling under the category of *sosa* (small-scale rituals) included Mount Mokmyeok in Seoul, Mount Ogwan and Gamak in Gyeonggi Province, Mount Gyeryong and Jungnyeong in Chungcheong Province, Mount Ubul and Juheul in Gyeongsang Province, Mount Geumseong in Jeolla Province, Mount Chiak and Uigwallyeong in Gangwon Province, and Mount Uyi in Punghae Province. While the rituals conducted at these mountains had originally been implemented by local governors, they were handled at the national level following their designation as the subjects of *sosa* (small-scale rituals). However, the rituals at Baekdusan, as well as in Mount Yongho and Mount Hwaak in Gyeonggi Province, continued to be implemented by the local governor (*Taejong sillok* 1414:14/8/21). Thus, while the practice of worshiping Baekdusan was inherited from Goryeo, the mountain was relegated to the lowest category within Joseon's ritual codes (*sajeon*).

This relegation appears to have been related to the notion of the ownership of Baekdusan. More to the point, the expansion of control over the northern territory that took place during the final period of Goryeo, and continued sway of the notion of ancestral mountains ensured that Baekdusan would be included in the national ritual codes (*sajeon*) put forward at the beginning of Joseon. However, the absence of any strong sense of ownership of Baekdusan made it impossible to include the latter in the *jungsa* (medium-scale ritual) or *sosa* (small-scale ritual) categories, a designation that would have to have been based solely on the symbolic importance of the mountain. The partial amendment of ritual codes during the reign of King Sejong saw many mountains be newly included as the subjects of national level rituals that fell neither under the category of *jungsa* or *sosa*. Baekdusan was one of the mountains that were included in this new category (*Sejong sillok* 1429:11/11/11).

However, the comprehensive reorganization of the ritual code in 1437 (19th year of King Sejong) saw Baekdusan, on the grounds that it fell outside

of the territory of Joseon, completely excluded from the list of mountains assigned by the court for national rituals (*Sejong sillok* 1437:19/3/13). The presence of Jurchen settlements scattered around Baekdusan and the growing concept that lords should be responsible for implementing rituals for the mountains and rivers within their territory resulted in the implementation of rituals for Baekdusan coming to a complete halt. The staging of rituals for mountains and rivers was designed to prevent natural disasters such as flood and drought. However, these rituals also reflected the spatial arrangement of the realm over which a king ruled, and the latter's concept of his territory. That being the case, the argument can easily be made that the notion of the ownership of Baekdusan that existed during early Joseon differed from that which prevailed during late Joseon.

As such, Baekdusan was long excluded from the national rituals of Joseon. While the traditional worship of Baekdusan as well as the conduct of rituals at the mountain may have continued to be carried out at the individual level, no historical materials have as yet been found to confirm this fact. On the other hand, the founding of Later Jin provided the Jurchens with an opportunity to revive at the national level the practice of worshipping and conducting rituals at Baekdusan, a practice that had disappeared with the collapse of the Jin dynasty. The *Manzhou Shilu* (滿洲實錄, Manchu Veritable Records) includes a legend-like record which states that the origins of the Qing dynasty can be traced back to the area east of Changbaishan (Baekdusan).

Following the relocation of its capital to Beijing, Qing began to place great importance on its origins. In this regard, Emperor Kangxi proved to be the first real proponent of the idea of reviving the worship of Baekdusan (Shinoda 2005:39). The *Qing Taizu Shilu* (清太祖實錄, Veritable Records of Qing Taizu) clearly states that the ancestors of the Qing dynasty did not originate from the area to the east of Baekdusan, but rather from the great mountain itself. Emperor Kangxi not only ordered that the Baekdusan area be surveyed, but also implemented rituals at Baekdusan. In 1678, Emperor Kangxi ordered that the status of the rituals at Baekdusan be elevated to that given to the five national mountains of the Qing dynasty (Yi 2008:130). Long after Joseon had excluded Baekdusan from its national ritual codes, the Jurchens, who had by now founded a new dynasty, began to gradually emphasize their worship of Baekdusan.

In addition, Qing also began a geographical survey of Baekdusan and the surrounding area that involved the production of records and maps designed to make its border with Joseon clearer. This strategy was heavily influenced by the frequent incidents involving encroachments of the border between Joseon and Qing, as well as by the Treaty of Nerchinsk between Qing and Russia (Park 2007). Some within Joseon understood Qing's actions as being motivated by the latter's desire to pave the way for its return to its original base once its power collapsed in central China.

The establishment of the Baekdusan boundary stone served not only as an opportunity to ease Joseon's concerns, but also to increase its interest in the Baekdusan area. It was amidst such circumstances that attempts began to be made to link the origins of Joseon's royal family to Baekdusan, and to implement rituals at Baekdusan. These claims were based on the fact that the ancestors of the Joseon royal family emanated from the Hamgyeong area, and that their graves could also be found in the region.

A significant spike in the level of interest in Mokjo, King Taejo's great-great-grandfather who had moved his power base from Gyeongwonbu to Hamheung, as well as in his and his wife's graves, which were respectively referred to as the *Deokneung* and *Anneung*, occurred during this period. During the reign of King Yeongjo, *Yeongbusa Yi Gwangjwa* lamented the fact that the *Deokneung* and *Anneung*, which he identified as being located in Baekdusan, had fallen into the hands of the barbarian Qing (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 39:846a). This statement is reminiscent of Nam Guman's earlier claim that not only was the area north of the Duman River where Mokjo and Ikjo had been born, but that the presence of the *Deokneung* and *Anneung* in the area meant that it should be regarded as holy ground (*Sukjong sillok* 1697:23/5/18).

The first person to truly emphasize the importance of the Baekdusan area in terms of its status as the point of origin of the Joseon royal family and to call for the implementation of rituals at Baekdusan was a man named Han Ikmo. Perceiving Baekdusan to be the progenitor of the Joseon royal family, Han pressed for the mountain to be included in the national ritual codes (*sajeon*). While to some extent agreeing with Han's claims, the officials who participated in the discussions at the time adopted the attitude that further opinions should be sought before making a decision that involved changing something as important as the national ritual codes (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 66:544c).

The reasons given for Baekdusan's exclusion from the national rituals included the fact that access to the mountain was regarded as being difficult, and that the ritual codes had been established before the development of the six garrisons (*yukjin*) in the area where Baekdusan stands. Thus, we can see that the period between the point in time in which the rituals at Baekdusan were ceased during the reign of King Sejong, and the reemergence of interest in Baekdusan as part of the process of establishing the Baekdusan boundary stone, was one in which officials' memories of such rituals at Baekdusan had all but been erased. In other words, it was this lack of knowledge about the history of rituals at Baekdusan that inevitably caused them to hesitate to make a decision on this matter.

Two months later the debate over the holding of rituals at Baekdusan was once again raised. On this occasion, the decision was made to expand the scope of people whose opinions were sought to include the *sallim* (rural literati) as well as local Confucian scholars (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 66:640d). While the establishment of national ritual codes was already considered to be one of the most important issues, the fact that Baekdusan was located in the border area rendered it even more difficult to reach a decision on this topic. Former *Busa* Yun Bonggu suggested at the time that the rituals for Baekdusan be conducted in the area south of the mountain. In this regard, Yun believed that although Baekdusan, given its status as the ancestral mountain of the founders of Joseon, should be identified as the most important site in which to implement rituals for mountains and rivers, its status as the *de facto* border with Qing meant that caution had to be exercised. However, the majority of the participants in this debate chose to put off making a decision. Given this general uncertainty, King Yeongjo ordered that the discussions on the holding of rituals at Baekdusan be brought to an end (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 66:759d).

After having lain dormant for several years, the debate over the holding of rituals at Baekdusan was reopened in earnest in 1767 (43rd year of King Yeongjo). Once again, Han Ikmo, who had since been promoted from *Yejo Panseo* (Minister of Rites) to *Jwauijeong* (Second State Councilor), proved to be the individual who spearheaded this movement. While holding steady to his argument that Baekdusan was the point of origin of the royal family, Han also introduced two new elements to his position. The first was that while the reorganization of the national ritual codes represented a very

serious undertaking, a precedent could be found for such a change. Here, Han identified the inclusion of the distant Mount Halla on Jeju Island in the national ritual codes based on the request of the Jeju governor in 1703. The second point which Han emphasized was that although many people had used Baekdusan's location on the border with Qing as grounds for refraining from holding rituals there, the holding of such rituals at the foot of the mountain, as had been done at Yiwulu Mountain, would pose no problem. Based on this logic, Han called for the Baekdusan rituals to be conducted at a ritual altar installed in the village of Musan that lay at the foot of Baekdusan in Hamgyeong Province (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 70:957f).

The great majority of the government officials assembled expressed their agreement with Han Ikmo's stance. Some officials argued that although Baekdusan had not been included in the national ritual codes because the latter had been established prior to the development of the six garrisons (*yukjin*), the designation of Mount Bibaek as the representative mountain in the northern area was in fact improper. Meanwhile, others maintained that as half of Baekdusan fell within the territory of Joseon, the holding of rituals at the foot of Baekdusan on the 15th day of each month (*mangje*) would in no way be problematic. Nevertheless, most of the participants hesitated to call for the immediate implementation of rituals at Baekdusan.

The tide having turned increasingly in favor of the holding of rituals at Baekdusan, Han Ikmo aggressively introduced new elements in support of his position. To begin with, he maintained that Joseon had no reason not to implement the rituals for Baekdusan in Musan, which was located some 80-*ri* away from the mountain. He based his reasoning on the fact that Qing, which possessed half of Baekdusan, also implemented rituals in a location that lay a few hundred-*ri* away from the mountain. Greatly inspired by the notion of Baekdusan as the point of origin of the royal family, King Yeongjo emerged as the biggest supporter of Han's idea (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 71:129f).

Seo Jisu, who held the position *Panjungchu Busa*, strongly opposed Han's stance. Seo argued that the Gyeongheung area in which the Joseon royal family had in fact originated was situated a good distance away from Baekdusan, that no mention of the notion of ancestral mountains was ever made in the Confucian Classics, and that the national ritual codes (*sajeon*) had in actuality been established after the development of the six garrisons (*yukjin*) (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 71:130f). In short, Seo Jisu refuted all the

major reasons which had been given for the implementation of the rituals in Baekdusan. However, the notions of the point of origin of the royal family and of ancestral mountains were not things that could be explained using concrete materials, but rather concepts that fell within the realm of symbolism and ideology. A similar situation applied to Qing, where the process of conducting rituals at Baekdusan was propelled forwards based solely on the will on Emperor Kangxi.

The six garrisons (*yukjin*) began to be developed in a full scale manner in 1434 (16th year of King Sejong) and were completed in 1449. As mentioned above, the ritual codes (*sajeon*) were in fact reorganized during the reign of King Sejong. Moreover, Baekdusan had by 1437 been excluded from the ritual codes. In this regards, the matter of whether this exclusion took place before or after the development of the six garrisons is one that is open to debate. In reality, as long as the perception that Baekdusan was jointly owned by Joseon and Qing existed, the holding of rituals at Baekdusan was an issue that would continue to revolve around the symbolic importance which both countries attached to this mountain. Viewed from this standpoint, the holding of rituals at Baekdusan can be said to have been propelled forward by the will of King Yeongjo to see such a denouement through.

The day in which Seo Jisu stated his case saw the greatest number of officials gather to express their own opinions on the subject. While the majority continued to call for caution to be exercised, a large number took a positive stance towards the matter. This positive outlook was rooted in the acceptance of the notions of ancestral mountains, of Baekdusan as the point of origin of the royal family, and in a generalized awareness that half of Baekdusan belonged to Joseon. During this meeting, an alternative measure was presented. More to the point, it was argued that the inaccessibility of Baekdusan, and the issue of the inclusion of Baekdusan in the national ritual codes, could be resolved by having the local governor implement rituals for Baekdusan on the 15th day of each month (*mangje*).

Those who refused to take a stance at this time maintained that Baekdusan's location on the border with Qing meant that the mountain was not completely within the territory of Joseon. Very few of the assembled that day believed that Baekdusan belonged to Qing. The few who opposed the motion argued that as Mount Bibaek had already been established

as the representative northern mountain (*bukak*), it would be difficult to simultaneously hold similar rituals at Baekdusan. Moreover, they also maintained that the holding of rituals at Baekdusan would be somewhat of a nuisance given the mountain's remote location. There was only one individual who opposed Han's stance on the grounds that, as Bunsuryeong Ridge was the actual border, Baekdusan did not belong to Joseon.

In the end, it was King Yeongjo who stepped forward to settle this debate. After having directed an official to read chapter 1 of the *Yongbi eocheonga* (Songs of Flying Dragons), Yeongjo let it be known that he had been greatly moved by the phrase, "The house of our founder was located in Gyeongheung." Having thus been swayed, King Yeongjo ordered that Baekdusan be identified as the ancestral mountain of Joseon, and that an altar be set up in an appropriate location so that rituals could be carried out on the 15th day of each month (*mangje*). As such, King Yeongjo in essence accepted Han Ikmo's assertions that Baekdusan was the point of origin of the royal family. Furthermore, Yeongjo identified Baekdusan as Joseon's ancestral mountain, and ordered that rituals be carried out at Baekdusan. As a result, Joseon started to once again implement rituals at Baekdusan well after Emperor Kangxi of Qing had ordered that such rituals be implemented on his side of the border. The two dynasties' implementation of rituals at Baekdusan thus had the effect of turning the mountain into a geographical entity shared by the countries, and into one which was the subject of worship on both sides of the border.

As the debate over the holding of rituals at Baekdusan closed, working-level discussions on such issues as ancestral tablets and ritual eulogies began in earnest. While the governor of Hamgyeong Province determined that the ritual should be held in Gapsan, the Ministry of Rites (*Yejo*) ordered that the construction of the altar in which the Baekdusan rituals were to be conducted be commenced in January of the next year. All the formalities related to these rituals were based on those used in conjunction with Mount Bibaek, which had long served as the representative northern mountain (*bukak*) (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 71:211c). However, Joseon did not abolish the rituals at Mount Bibaek, but rather conducted them alongside those at Baekdusan. The rituals at Baekdusan were implemented in a full-scale manner from 1768 onwards (44th year of King Yeongjo).

Mangdeokpyeong located just north of Unchongbo, or 80-*ri* away

from Gapsanbu in Hamgyeong Province, was selected as the site for these rituals (Jeong 2002:327). While the magistrate of Gapsan implemented the rituals at Baekdusan on behalf of the king, the military chiefs from the garrisons served as officiates (*Nosangchu ilgi* 2005:153). As mentioned above, the rituals for mountains and rivers were at this time implemented by the local governors. For instance, the rituals at Mount Bibaek were implemented by the Pangwan of Hamheung (*Ilseongnok* 19:222b). Rituals at Baekdusan were held all the way to the end of the Joseon dynasty.

The rituals at Baekdusan underwent another change during the Daehan Empire's Gwangmu era. More to the point, the reign of King Gojong saw the notion of the ownership of Baekdusan be expanded to include the entire mountain. This change was clearly on display during the territorial negotiations with Qing in which Joseon strongly asserted that the area north of the Duman River fell within the confines of its territory. Having established the Daehan Empire, King Gojong bestowed the title of emperor upon himself, a designation which placed him on an even keel with the ruler of the Qing dynasty. Gojong established national ceremonies and rites that reflected his status as emperor, a process exemplified by the establishment of new national ritual codes in 1903.

The reorganization of the ritual ceremonies for mountains (*ak*), seas (*hae*), and rivers (*dok*) resulted in the identification of five new mountains, namely Mount Geumgang, Myohyang, Jiri, Baekdu, and Samgak. These mountains were selected based on the four cardinal directions and the central defense structure (*Gojong sillok* 1903:40/3/19). As such, while Mount Bibaek was excluded, Baekdusan assumed the status of *bukak*. In terms of the changes from the reign of King Sejong, in addition to Baekdusan, Mount Geumgang and Myohyang were added, while Mount Songak was removed. This reflected the change in the perception of Joseon's mountains and rivers. Here, the development of the northern area, expansion of the concept of territory, and deepening of the perception of Baekdusan, can be identified as the main factors which led to this overall change.

Expansion of the Interest and Exploration of Baekdusan

Domestic interest in Baekdusan greatly increased after the establishment

of the Baekdusan boundary stone. Thus, memories of, and interest in, Baekdusan, whose location along the distant border and overall inaccessibility had caused it to fade from the national psyche for a long period of time, was revived with the establishment of the boundary stone. In addition to studying the natural environment, geography, and history of Baekdusan, Joseon officials and intellectuals also travelled to the mountain to experience it directly. This renewed focus on the mountain was linked to the growing interest in the northern area and in the concept of territory, all of which in turn resulted in expanding overall territorial awareness (Jo 1974; Gang 2005).

A new perception of Baekdusan was thus formed during the process of establishing the Baekdusan boundary stone. Prior to the establishment of the boundary stone, Baekdusan was solely regarded as an ancestral mountain. Moreover, outside of the residents in the border area, the mountain did not capture the imagination of the people of Joseon. However, the erection of the boundary stone between Joseon and Qing had the effect of creating the awareness that Baekdusan was in fact the actual border between the two nations. In an instant, Baekdusan, which had long existed as an ambiguous and metaphysical symbol, was transformed into a concrete entity known as the border. This denouement in turn provided another opportunity to establish new symbolism for Baekdusan.

The process of establishing the Baekdusan boundary stone, which served as an opportunity to develop a new perception of the mountain, is clearly laid out in government documents, as well as in individual works compiled during late Joseon. The majority of these records were based on Hong Setae's *Baekdusangi* (Record of Baekdusan). Hong Setae was a friend of Kim Gyeongmun, the Joseon interpreter who climbed Baekdusan alongside Mu Kedeng. Although Hong did not directly take part in this process, his account is regarded as being reliable because it was compiled based on his exchanges with Kim Gyeongmun, who as mentioned above had participated directly in the process of establishing the boundary stone.

In his indirect account, Hong Setae described in a relatively detailed manner the process in which the Baekdusan boundary stone was established. In this work, Hong described the state of affairs at Baekdusan, Joseon's internal debate over the designation of the halfway point of Baekdusan as the border between the two nations, and the process through which Mu Kedeng unilaterally determined the point of origin of the two rivers and

erected the boundary stone. In addition, the *Bukjeongnok* compiled by Kim Jinam, who was Kim Gyeongmun's father, has served as a significant source of information for ensuing generations about the dialogue that took place between Joseon and Qing during the process of establishing the boundary stone.

Although these sources have helped to shed some much-needed light on the process through which the Baekdusan boundary stone was established, Joseon officials and intellectuals of the day did not clearly separate Baekdusan, which they continued to perceive as the actual border, from the newly established boundary stone. Although the boundary stone erected by Mu Kedeng was a good distance away from the top of Baekdusan, they continued to regard Cheonji Lake as the point of origin of the Amnok and Tomun Rivers. In order to simplify matters, some of these officials even claimed that the boundary stone was in fact located at the top of Baekdusan (Yi Geungik 1977:378).

Meanwhile, Seo Myeongeung, who traveled directly to Baekdusan, pointed out that Cheonji Lake was not the point of origin of the Amnok and Tomun Rivers, but rather connected to the Heilong River (Seo 1822: 293). As Cheonji Lake actually flows into Songhua River, which is a tributary of the Heilong River, Seo can be said to have been partially right. Nevertheless, Seo did not believe that Cheonji Lake should belong to Qing.

The majority of those who exhibited an interest in Baekdusan continued to perceive Cheonji Lake, and not the boundary stone, as the point of origin of these two rivers. Contents which seemingly confirmed the veracity of this claim can also be found in the *Daqing yitongzhi* (大青一統志, Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Great Qing) that served as the official records of the Qing dynasty (Bae 2007). The origins of the competing beliefs that Baekdusan was the border between the two nations, and that Cheonji Lake was the actual border can thus be traced back to such long-enduring notions and historical contents. In the end, the establishment of the boundary stone did not negatively influence Joseon's understanding of its ownership of Baekdusan.

As time went by, there began to emerge voices which called into question the process through which the boundary stone had been established; meanwhile, others unashamedly stated that the boundary stone had been erected in an improper manner. Such complaints were for the

most part related to the area north of the Duman River. During the reign of King Yeongjo, Song Inmyeong lamented to the king the fact that Joseon had needlessly lost some 700-*ri* of territory by designating the Duman River as the border instead of the Songhua River (*Seungjeongwon ilgi* 51:8b). To this end, Song claimed that as the Tomun River was in fact the Duman River, the eastern border of Baekdusan should have been established near the Songhua River located further to the north.

Song's perception was closely related to the stele that had been erected during the Goryeo dynasty by Yun Gwan in Seonchullyeong Ridge (Xianchunling). This sense of discontent with the location of the Baekdusan boundary stone was associated with the fact that the representatives of Joseon did not use Yun Gwan's stele located north of the Duman River as leverage during their negotiations with Mu Kedeng (Yi Ik 1977:213). The location of Seonchullyeong Ridge some 700-*ri* north of the Duman River inevitably left some feeling that Joseon had failed to lay claim to land that rightfully belonged to it. To this end, proponents of this line of reasoning maintained that the boundary stone should have been established near the Bungye River located at the foot of Seonchullyeong Ridge (*Mangi yoram* 1967:508).

However, none of those who described or criticized the process through which the Baekdusan boundary stone was established believed that the location of the boundary effectively denied Joseon's claim to ownership of Baekdusan, or to Cheonji Lake situated at the top of the mountain. The few who linked the boundary stone to the matter of ownership of Baekdusan focused their criticism on the fact that Joseon's failure to clearly identify Baekdusan as part of its territory had resulted in it having to share the mountain with Qing (Yi 1803:349). The keys to this debate were in fact not Baekdusan itself, but rather the point of origin and location of the Tomun River that lay to the east of Baekdusan, and the issue of ownership of the area north of the Duman River. These issues eventually also became the main points of contention in the territorial disputes that emerged during the modern era.

Following the establishment of the Baekdusan boundary stone, the perception that Baekdusan was located on the border between Joseon and Qing began to take root not only amongst government officials, but also where local intellectuals were concerned. Contrary to the prevailing

perception during early Joseon that Baekdusan belonged to the Jurchens, this period saw the gradual spread of the notion that Joseon shared Baekdusan with Qing. The concept that the area south of Baekdusan belonged to Joseon, a perception which was rooted in the belief that the top of Baekdusan served as the border between the two countries, can also be said to have originated from this notion of the shared ownership of the mountain. Thus, interest in Baekdusan during this period began to encompass the matter of ownership of the mountain.

Although more symbolic in nature than concrete, one finds ample evidence of the concept that Baekdusan belonged to Joseon in records produced during this period. In his firsthand record written as he climbed Baekdusan, Seo Myeongeung stated, “Our Baekdusan is much like China’s Kunlunshan” (Seo 1822:287). Meanwhile, Jo Eom who visited Japan as a member of the *Tongsinsa* (royal delegation to Japan), wrote while looking out at Lake Ashi near Mount Fuji, “Our Baekdusan is also home to a great lake” (Jo Eom 1974:398). As such, much as had been the case with the notion of Baekdusan as Joseon’s ancestral mountain, Baekdusan was despite the actual location of the border, identified as belonging to Joseon.

Interest in Baekdusan also extended to its geographical features and names. In addition to the geography books produced in Joseon, information about Baekdusan was also gleaned from materials introduced from Ming and Qing. To this end, a number of works dealing with the geography of Joseon included a separate section on Baekdusan.

During this process, incorrect information about Baekdusan was to some extent modified. For example, while Cheonji Lake was recorded as being 80-*ri* in circumference during early Joseon, this was now reduced, first to 40-*ri* and then to 10-*ri*, to reflect the actual situation on the ground (*Sinjeung dongguk yeoji seungnam* 2005:274; Seo 1822:292; Yi 1998:234). Although no in-depth exploration was carried out, the mere fact that such explorations were in fact conducted nevertheless resulted in the amendment of errant geographical information. In addition, a comparison of various materials led to the conclusion that the names Mount Bulham, Gaema, Dotae, and Taebaek were somehow related to Baekdusan (Han 1823:690; Jeong 2002:327).

The process of expanding and modifying the geographical information about Baekdusan was accompanied by a spike in the symbolism associated

with the mountain. Studies on the geographical features of mountains in China and Joseon produced in the latter during the eighteenth century tended to identify Mount Kunlun, Mount Yiwulu, and Baekdusan as these two countries' representative mountains. In particular, Baekdusan and Mount Kunlun were introduced respectively as the ancestral mountains of the east and west (Kim 1976:390). This type of reasoning, which identified Baekdusan as a prestigious mountain equivalent to China's Mount Kunlun, effectively melded the notion of Baekdusan as Joseon's ancestral mountain and the concept of the latter as an integral part of Joseon's territory. Furthermore, there even emerged individuals who sought to trace the origins of Japanese mountains back to Baekdusan (Jo Eom 1974:182). As such, Baekdusan's symbolic status as Joseon's most representative mountain, and as an entity that was not governed by geographical boundaries, was strengthened.

Joseon's intellectuals were of course also well aware of Qing's own rituals at Baekdusan. Based on materials obtained from Qing, they were also able to develop a better understanding of the tales related to Baekdusan, and of the related rituals carried out by the Jin dynasty prior to the foundation of Qing. They were also keenly conscious of the fact that Emperor Kangxi of Qing had ordered the revival and strengthening of Baekdusan rituals as part of efforts to identify the mountain as the point of origin of Qing (Hong 1843:576; Yi 1813:96). Despite this awareness, concrete steps were taken to enhance the worship, symbolism, and concept of ownership of Baekdusan in Joseon. This turn of events can be regarded as having been motivated not only by an awareness of the bond between Joseon and Baekdusan, but also by Joseon's desire to create its own sense of pride in the face of growing Qing efforts to this end.

Attempts to strengthen the meaning and symbolic role played by Baekdusan in the development of history continued to expand as time went by. One such example revolved around the effort to identify Baekdusan, and not the commonly accepted Mount Myohyang, as the Mount Taebaek referred to in tales related to Goguryeo. The identification of Baekdusan as the Mount Taebaek of lore effectively rendered the latter the birthplace of Dangun. Thus, Baekdusan became perceived as falling within the territory of both Gojoseon and Goguryeo, and the origin of these two ancient kingdoms was traced back to Baekdusan.

Thus, while Baekdusan was the subject of worship by both Joseon and Qing, Joseon was now in actual fact able to secure the upper hand in terms of linking itself to the historical origins of Baekdusan. Regardless of where the actual border lay, the symbolic importance of Baekdusan for Koreans had now been further expanded. Attempts to relate Baekdusan to the development of Korean national history were further expanded from the modern era onwards. To this end, these efforts can be regarded as having helped to further strengthen the symbolic meaning of Baekdusan.

Growing interest in Baekdusan also stimulated the desire to directly explore the mountain. The explorations of Baekdusan conducted in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the boundary stone were carried out by government officials charged with precise missions. For instance, during the reign of King Sukjong, Hong Chijung climbed Baekdusan while on his way to investigate instances of corruption in Hamgyeong Province in order to gain a better understanding of the geographical layout of the area (*Sukjong sillok* 1713:39/1/22). Local governors were also dispatched to investigate Baekdusan and the boundary stone during the reign of King Yeongjo (*Yeongjo sillok* 1739:15/3/17). In addition, central government officials in charge of the inspection of Hamgyeong Province also climbed Baekdusan in order to gain a firsthand look at the situation surrounding the boundary stone. Although ritual-related matters gradually became the main reason for the exploration of Baekdusan during the late reign of King Yeongjo, government officials continued to be routinely sent to the area.

However, a number of the magistrates of areas near Baekdusan, as well as individuals, also carried out private trips to Baekdusan. While the magistrate of Gapsan Yi Uicheol made a trip to Baekdusan in 1751, the Confucian scholar from Gyeongseong, Park Jong, climbed Baekdusan along with Sin Sangwon in 1764. Both of these individuals left behind travelogues of Baekdusan (Yi Sangtae ed. 1998). In 1766, Seo Myeongeung and Jo Eom, who had been respectively exiled to Gapsan and Samsu, travelled to Baekdusan along with the magistrates from these areas (Seo 1822:276). At the time, Seo Myeongeung confessed that touring Baekdusan and Mount Geumgang represented one of his lifelong dreams.

Here, several significant points can be raised. One was that Baekdusan had by this point become a famous mountain which inspired people to visit its slopes. A mere 50 years after the establishment of the boundary

stone, Baekdusan had come to be perceived as a mountain whose renown was rivaled only by Mount Geumgang. Another point which can be raised in conjunction with these treks was that all those who made the journey to Baekdusan climbed to the top of the mountain in order to take in the splendor of Cheonji Lake. Such treks would not have been possible if they had perceived the territory of Joseon as having begun south of the boundary stone. The absence of such a mentality is evidenced by the fact that many of those who made the trip to Baekdusan were central officials who had been exiled to the area and local magistrates.

Others also travelled to Baekdusan. Yi Ik recorded a conversation he had with a visitor who climbed Baekdusan, Jeong Yakyong penned an ode to his friend before the latter left for Baekdusan. Given the strong likelihood that many people who made the trip did not leave behind travelogues, the conclusion can be reached that the number of individuals who travelled to Baekdusan was in fact be much greater. The establishment of the Baekdusan boundary stone and the implementation of rituals at Baekdusan had the effect of reviving interest in the long forgotten mountain, and in also stimulating attempts to explore the geography and history of Baekdusan. This in turn caused a spread in the concept of Joseon's ownership of Baekdusan, strengthened the symbolism associated with the mountain, and stimulated the desire to directly explore Baekdusan. This process was further expanded upon from the modern era onwards.

Conclusion

Although many issues were raised during the process that saw Joseon and Qing establish a common border in 1712, the most contentious proved to be the determination of the point of origin of the Tomun River. In this regard, this issue became the main sticking point during the territorial negotiations that took place during the reign of King Gojong, as well as one of the main concerns of scholars and laymen alike to this day. However, Baekdusan, which was located between these two rivers, became another hot button issue because of the ambiguous nature of the border. Furthermore, much like Qing, Joseon also included Baekdusan as one of its subject for worship. The growing symbolic importance attached to Baekdusan as a

result of the worship of the mountain in turn influenced the awareness of Joseon's ownership of Baekdusan.

During early Joseon, Baekdusan was regarded as belonging to the Jurchens. This perception was based on the fact that not only did Joseon's territory not extend to the area north of Baekdusan, but a scattering of Jurchen villages could be found in the area south of the mountain. It was against this backdrop that the practice of conducting rituals at Baekdusan, inherited from Goryeo, was officially suspended during the reign of King Sejong. While interest in Baekdusan subsequently decreased, the notion of Baekdusan as the ancestral mountain of Joseon, and as the point of origin of its mountains and rivers, continued unabated.

The foundation of the Qing dynasty created a situation in which two dynasties faced off against one another across Baekdusan. As part of the process of strengthening his nation's worship of Baekdusan, Emperor Kangxi of Qing set out to establish a clear-cut border with Joseon. This situation in turn served as an opportunity for Joseon to revive its own interest in Baekdusan. The period that followed the establishment of a boundary stone that effectively placed the border at Baekdusan was one in which Joseon focused its attention on securing and developing the area south of Baekdusan. Meanwhile, despite the location of the boundary stone, the spread of the notion that Baekdusan's Cheonji Lake was the point of origin of the Amnok and Tomun Rivers resulted in the creation of the impression that the former was the actual border between the two nations.

Much like Emperor Kangxi, King Yeongjo also regarded Baekdusan as the point of origin of the royal family. In this regard, he was the individual responsible for the strengthening of the symbolism of the mountain, and the official implementation of the rituals at Baekdusan. The revival of the long dormant rituals at Baekdusan had the effect of strengthening the notion within Joseon that Baekdusan belonged to it. In addition, the conduct of studies on the geography and history of Baekdusan spurred a renewed interest in Joseon's northern area. The belief that the border between the two nations was in actuality situated on the top of Baekdusan spread to local intellectuals. On the other hand, they regarded all of Baekdusan as falling within the territory of Joseon.

Intellectuals' conduct of studies on Baekdusan in turn stimulated their desire to directly explore the mountain. While government officials climbed

Baekdusan as part of their missions, local magistrates, intellectuals, and even those who had been exiled to the area also climbed the mountain. Baekdusan's emergence as a mountain which stimulated a strong desire to take it in firsthand ushered in a sense of pride amongst Koreans which was comparable to the one that Chinese nationals had with regards to Mount Kunlun. All of these treks were possible because the location of the boundary stone was not linked to the matter of the ownership of Baekdusan.

The notion of Korea's ownership of Baekdusan experienced a further strengthening during the modern era as the status of Baekdusan was elevated to that of Joseon's representative northern mountain. In addition, it was also during this period that efforts to identify Baekdusan as the starting point of Korean history emerged. The symbolic importance of Baekdusan was further enhanced following its identification as a subject of worship by a religion that was rooted in the notion of nationalism. Unlike the continued ambiguity surrounding the border at Baekdusan, the notion of Joseon's ownership of Baekdusan, the latter's symbolism, and the desire to explore the great mountain only increased from late Joseon onwards.

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Abstract

The erection of the Baekdusan Boundary Stone that demarcated the border between the two countries was not based on any clear exchange of opinions between the two sides as to whom Baekdusan belonged. While the southern part of Baekdusan fell within Joseon's sphere of activity, the northern side was occupied by Qing. Despite this reality, the issue of who possessed sovereignty over Baekdusan was never clearly resolved. In Joseon, Baekdusan was traditionally perceived as the source of Korea's mountains and rivers and identified as an object of worship. The symbolic significance granted to the mountain was further strengthened following the erection of the boundary stone. Shortly thereafter, Joseon began to once again hold ritual ceremonies for the mountain, which was now identified as the point of origin of the royal family. A similar phenomenon also emerged during the Qing dynasty. Thus, the two kingdoms undertook the process of heightening the symbolism attached to this disputed space in a similar manner. Joseon intellectuals' interest in Baekdusan was expanded to include the desire to gain firsthand knowledge and investigate the famed mountain. The actual location of the Boundary Stone and the issue of the territorial jurisdiction over Baekdusan were largely ignored in favor of a new approach in which the boundary between the two kingdoms was perceived as being located at the top of Baekdusan. Moreover, in some cases, Baekdusan was perceived as falling entirely within Joseon's territory. This perception was further strengthened after the modern era, and linked to the upgrading of Baekdusan's status and the expansion of its symbolism.

Keywords: Baekdusan boundary stone, ancestral mountain, origins of Joseon's royal family, national rituals, notion of ownership

