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Sommaire

ARTICLES ET ÉTUDES

NOTES ET DISCUSSIONS

ALEXANDER KIM, BOHAI REBELLION OF DA YEN-LIN (1029-1030) IN THE LIAO EMPIRE......59

Annales d'Université Valahia Targoviste, Section d'Archéologie et d'Histoire, Tome XXIII, 2021, p. 59-65. ISSN: 1584-1855; ISSN (online): 2285–3669.



Bohai rebellion of Da Yen-lin (1029-1030) in the Liao Empire

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Abstract. After destruction of Bohai state in 926, Khitan rulers deported a part of local population in the territory of their Empire. Bohai remained population lived in different conditions in Liao Empire. Sometimes, Bohai population rebelled against Khitans for several reasons. Most great among them was the rebellion in 1029-1030 conducted by Da Yen-lin. The aims of this work are consideration of specifics of this action and analyze some aspects of rebellion.

Keywords: Liao, Khitans, Sin Liao, rebellion, Bohai remained population.

In 926, Khitans destroyed Bohai state (Park, 1995). In spite of great victory (military expedition was during ten days and fast control of the Capital), Khitan military troops scared resistance of Bohai people and deported part of them in the Liao Empire. After this process, many Bohai people adapted in life in the Khitan state (Kim, 2020). Many Bohai persons become good officials in the Liao Empire, and Bohai soldiers fought for Khitans in wars against China (Kim, 2015) and Koryo (An, 2003). For example, Bohai general Gao Mou-han became famous person in the wars of Liao and Chinese empires (Kim, 2015). He used Bohai, Khitan and Chinese soldiers in the military operations. Gao Mou-han and his people conquered a vast territory in China for Liao. Therefore, many Liao nobles believed to Bohai persons in the administrative apparatus and high estimated Bohai soldiers in the army. However, discrimination policy against Bohai population remained in the Liao Empire (Vorob`ev, 1975), and it was reason of the Bohai rebellions. However, the position of Bohai people in the Khitan state was better than Chinese or Jurchen.

Usually many historians believe that Bohai rebellion in Liao Empire (1029-1030) was greatest in the history of Bohai population in the Khitan state (*Parhaesa*, 1996). Reasons for this event were attempts of Liao government to use new taxis for Bohai people (Ivliev, 1988). But it was important result – serious drought in the empire. Khitan officials started to use new taxis for alcohol and salt, to use raised trade duties (Yu, 2000, p. 65-66), because they needed in the material resources in new economic conditions. However, Bohai people could not accept these measures. This system of taxis was not a new in the Liao Empire; before 1029 Khitan already used it for Chinese population (Wittfogel and Feng Chia, 1949, p. 405). Probably, Bohai population in the Eastern Capital had another system of taxis (which was more easy and comfortable then for Chinese), therefore Bohai people considered the new economic measures of Khitan officials as reason for conflict.

Moreover, as result of drought, Yan region in Liao Empire had problem with food. Thus, Khitan officials started to move the bread from Eastern Capital to Yan region (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii* 2007, p. 98). This measure

Bohai rebellion of Da Yen-lin (1029-1030) in the Liao Empire

was considered by Bohai population very negatively, and their position can be understood - in period of drought the bread had very important significance for population of cities. But this activity of Khitan officials was dictated by state and imperial court.

However, in modern Korean states it is considered another reason for rebellion by Da Yen-lin. Taxis policy of Khitan officials and situation with bread were believed as occasion for rebellion, but real reason were national discrimination and corrupted officials in Liao, and Bohai people wanted to live in their Bohai state (*Parhaesa* 1996).

Wittfogel and Feng Chia (1949, p. 404-405) assumed that rebellion had mainly economic reasons, and later in this process the political aspects were dominated. In opinion of this scholars, conflict of 1029-1030 was revolution more than rebellion.

Therefore, for understanding of this event we need to consider main events of Bohai rebellion.

Conflict started in the province of Eastern capital of the Khitan state. This city was a former capital of the Dongdan - Bohai buffer state of Khitans in 10th C. (Dongdan was a state for adaptation of the Bohai population to Khitan power; when Liao officials believed that Bohai population adapted to Khitan administrative system, this state was liquidated). This province included 9 regions and 87 counties at that time. In spite of mass deportations before, great number of the Bohai people remained and lived in this province. They were recognized as loyal population for Khitans, but situation with taxis moved them for fighting.

The head of this rebellion, Da Yen-lin, used discontent of the local population and started military activity against Liao (*Parhaesa* 1996, p. 89; Wittfogel and Feng Chia, 1949, p. 419; Yu 2000, p. 67) in 8th month of 9th year Tai-pin (1029). He was commander of military contingents "Sheli" (guards troops) in the capital (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii* 2007, p. 207), being very useful for control of the city. He arrested a number of Khitan leaders, including members from Imperial dynasty, for example, king's son-in-law Xiao Xiao-hsien and his wife, princess Nangyan and sent them in the prison (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii* 2007, p. 98). Moreover, soldiers of Da Yen-lin killed part of Khitan officials in the city, for example, Chairman of the Ministry of Finance Han Shao-shung, advisor Wang Tsia, main commander of garrison Xiao Pude (Wittfogel and and Feng Chia, 1949, p. 419; *Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii* 2007, p. 98). Murder of these people was not accidental, many Bohai believed that executed officials were guilty in economic problems of the capital and moved the bread to Yan district. Probably the murder of Xiao Pude had another reason – his liquidation can destroy organized resistance of Khitan soldiers against Bohai rebellion in the capital (moreover, he was commander of Da Yen-lin and likely between both generals were antagonistic relations, otherwise Xiao Pude can be arrested) and can create panic tendency among Liao officials.

As we can see, rebellion had economic reasons. In this case, Khitan can change economic policy and it can be stopped the Bohai rebellion. Moreover, many persons among Bohai population wanted peaceful life and did not have interest in the fighting with Khitans. Probably, Da Yen-lin understood it and needed to search another base for rebels. Certainly, in this case political motivation can be better for development of rebellion.

Da Yen-lin mobilized his supporters in the Eastern Capital. All troops of "sheli" in this city moved to his side (Wittfogel and and Feng Chia, 1949, p. 520). Therefore, Da Yen-lin controlled all lands of the province, declared about creation of Bohai State -Sin Liao (Xing Liao), and called himself as Emperor (Han, 1994, p. 260 – 261; Yu, 2000, p. 67; *Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 89).

Da Yen-lin was a descendant of Da Juorong (founder of Bohai state in 698) and can consider it for his rights in creation of new state. In Liao Empire he was member of Bohai aristocracy in the Eastern Capital (Yu, 2000, p. 65; *Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 89). New state created official apparatus and financial system (Wittfogel and Feng Chia, 1949, p. 314). Of course, in many aspects it was a copy of the Liao system.

However, according to the position of Wittfogel and Feng Chia (1949, p. 405), this state form could not be called as empire, because it was self-proclaimed state and neighboring states (like, Koryo kingdom) did not recognize it as empire. Later, Da Yen-lin created agreements with western, south and northern Jurchens against

Alexander Kim

Liao, because these tribes did not like the policy of Khitan state (Wittfogel and Feng Chia, 1949, p. 588; Yu, 2000, p. 67).

Da Yen-lin very fast mobilized military contingents of Bohai people who fought with Khtain troops in the areas of province of the Eastern Capital. Bohai army received support from Chinese peasants (*Parhaesa*, 1996). In period of drought, many Chinese peasants did not work in the agriculture and moved to robbers. Sometimes, these robber groups can be very strong - until to some dozen thousands people. Chinese peasant armies played important role in the history of ancient and medieval China (Goncharov, 1986), sometimes created new ruler dynasties (*Istoriia stran zarubezhnoj Azii v srednie veka*, 1970). We don't have exact information about number of Chinese peasants in Bohai army. However, economic troubles can be the reason why many Chinese peasants and robbers can arrive in army of Da Yen-lin. Moreover, Bohai military groups can receive support from Xsi tribe (Wittfogel, 1949, p. 407-408).

Interesting fact - Da Yen-lin very fast occupied many regions of the province, but as is known, Khitan officials banned from practicing equestrian polo for Bohai people and as result Bohai population had problem with horsebreeding. Liao officials did not like possibility for creation of Bohai cavalry. Army of Da Yen-lin very fast moved in regions with Bohai population, but his speed was slowly in places without Bohai people. Moreover, Khitan general Xiao Pidi mobilized his military troops and tried to stop troops of Sin Liao (Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii 2007: 98).

Da Yen-lin sent ambassador Go Gil Dok in Koryo for inform about establishment his state and asked about military help (Wittfogel, 1949, p. 420; *Parhaesa*, 1996). Reason for this activity was the fact that after rebellion of Bohai people the Koryo stopped diplomatic relations with Liao (Yu, 2000, p. 66). However, Koryo refused to help Da Yen. Moreover, Koryo supported defense of border, probably, afraid of attack of Sin Liao (Wittfogel, 1949, p. 420). Therefore, Da Yen-lin asked about help again and mentioned that Koryo can receive Khitan lands in the Yalu river (*Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 90).

In total, Da Yen-lin sent in Koryo five ambassadorial missions. Go Gil Dok was a head of first and forth missions, the head of second mission was Da Eyon jong, who was relative of Da Yen-lin. Mayors of Inchou-city, Da Han kyuon, and Lee Kwang rok were heads of third and fifth missions (Han 1994, p. 264; *Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 91). Koryo refused the military support for all his missions (Wittfogel 1949: 420), but sent to Sin Liao gifts (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii*, 2007, p. 98).

We believe that Da Yen-lin had talks about recognition of his state from Koryo – ordinary process for all new medieval states in the East Asia. But it was very complicated question for Koryo. At first, Koryo was kingdom and in the legal aspect can't recognize the Empire. At second, Koryo did not have interest in establishment of new state near her borders.

Koryo officials considered new situation, but they overestimated potential of Bohai population in Liao and results of crisis, underestimated Khitan army. Threfore they sent small military contingents in territory of Liao Empire. All these groups were destroyed by Khitan border troops (Wittfogel, 1949, p. 318). It had influence to positions of Koryo officials. Korean scholars believe that this military activity were attempt to help Sin Liao, but Soviet specialists considered it as Koryo tried to receive lands of Liao Empire (*Parhaesa*, 1996; *Okladnikov*, 1959; Okladnikov, Derevyanko, 1973).

According to information from "Koryo sa" (Korean medieval annals), Koryo king discussed with nobles about situation with Sin Liao. In spite of some generals, who wanted to occupy some lands of Liao, many officials did not want it. Part of nobles with political leader Che Sa Wi urged king to be careful in this situation, noting that this is "a dangerous activity, in which one cannot but be careful and whether this (activity) will be beneficial" (*Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 90-91).

Bohai rebellion of Da Yen-lin (1029-1030) in the Liao Empire

As result of this discussion, Koryo understood that can't fight against Liao Empire successfully and did not take part in the rebellion of Da Yen-lin. Moreover, Bohai military contingents did not have good connection between each other and gave good possibilities for Khitan army for attack. Bohai army did not mobile move in the many areas and did not consolidate for fight with Khitan army.

Ye Longli wrote about incident with Su Shi-zhen. According information of this Chinese historian, in the 11th C. in the old Bohai lands was rebellion of Su Shi-zhen. A great number of Bohai people took part in this rebellion, and only in the East Capital stayed some dozen thousands soldiers. Bohai army start expedition against Kihtan military contingents. Liao Emperor ordered Xiao Xiao-mu to Commander of army and sent hum against rebellion. His army was greatest than army of Su-Shi-zhen.

Su Shi-zhen moved to mountain, created camp and surrounded it with a palisade. His position was good and attack of Kihtan army had many problems. Liao army can move to the Eastern Capital, but the great Bohai army can attack in the rear of Khitan. Therefore, Liao army stayed near Bohai military contingents. Xiao Xiao-mu declared about forgiveness of Emperor for rebels as result more than 70 thousands of Bohai families capitulated. Khitans considered it as great success and Xiao Xiao-mu received high-level rank (Ye, 1979, p. 248-249); according another information, Xiao Xiao-mu received it only after destruction of rebellion of Da Yen-lin (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii*, 2007, p. 99). As we can see, policy of Khitans was very loyalty for Bohai rebels. Probably, it had dealing with the position of Bohai people in Liao Empire or dangerous of their rebellion. However, records about Su shi-zhen are very small, therefore we don't have exact information about his activity.

However, only Ye Longli mentioned Su Shi-zhen. In the materials of "Liao shi", Xiao Xiao-mu received awards for destruction of rebellion of Da Yen-lin. Therefore we can consider three options about Su Shi-zhen: 1. Chinese historians had mistaken and considered Da Yen-lin as Su shi-zhen; 2. Su shi-zhen was one general of Sin Liao; 3. he was independent leader of Bohai rebels and was did not have dealing to the Da Yen-lin. If Su Shi-zhen was independent leader of Bohai rebels, incident with him for Liao was episode of war against Da Yen-lin, thus Khitan did not pay great attention. For Liao, the way to Eastern Capital was most important. After capitulation of army of Su shi-zhen, the Khitans received possibility for attack the Eastern Capital.

If Su shi-zhen was one general of Sin Liao, capitulation of his soldiers with families was great blow for Sin Liao. Da Yen-lin loose not only 70 thousands soldiers, but economic support of their families too. Moreover, recently Khitan army did not have problem with partisan activity in rear. Therefore, Khitan armies of Xiao Xiaomu and Xiao Pidi arrived to Bao-chou (*Parhaesa*, 1996). Further, inspector Xiao Punu arrived in this army (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii*, 2007: 99).

Da Yen-lin tried to occupy this city, because Bao-chou had strategic importance - it was the way to Koryo. In Bao-chou located Liao garrison, part of it was Bohai troop with commander Ha Hen Mi (Bohai person). Ruler of Sin Liao sent him letter and asked about support, but Ha Hen Mi informed the Khitans about it (Wittfogel, 1949, p. 464). Probably, Bohai soldiers in Bao-chou wanted to come in Da Yen-lin side. Consequently, Khitans attacked Bohai soldiers in Bao-chou and murdered 800 of them (Yu, 2000, p. 67). In "Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii" (2007, p. 98), we can see another version of this incident: Yelui Bugu intercepted information about Bohai rebels in garrison and murdered them. Before this incident, generals of Sin Liao Wang, Do Phen and Hwang Phen, escaped from Haunlunfu to Eastern Capital and Khitans received this city without battle (Yu, 2000, p. 67).

After it, Bohai military contingents tried to stop Khitan army near Phosu, and Liao troops won in this battle. Da Yen-lin tried to attack Shenchou; this city was an important base for Khitan army in the province of Eastern Capital. But ruler of Sin Liao loose time (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii*, 2007, p. 98). The part of inhabitants of Shenchou consisted of Khitan settlers, they did not like of Bohai population. City was prepared for defense, Da Yen-lin can't take it and came back in Capital (Yu, 2000, p. 67-68). After discussion among commanders, the

Khitan army blocked the city (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii*, 2007, p. 99) and used experience of Gao Mo Han for control all areas near Eastern Capital.

The city was prepared for defense and resistance against Khitan and the army was strong, but Bohai general Yan Sianshi, who was a scholar and Head of defense in south direction of the capital, betrayed Da Yen-lin. He had secret talks with Kihatns and open gates for Liao army (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii*, 2007, p. 99). Khitan army took Eastern capital, and arrested Da Yen-lin. So, in the night 25 day 8 month 1930 the Sin Liao was ended (Yu, 2000, p. 68; *Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 91).

Koryo officials noted this situation, they considered the activity in the Sin Liao. Koryo sent ambassador in Liao with congratulation for receiving the Eastern Capital. Moreover, Koryo king apologized because did not send ambassadors before in Khitan state and explained this situation by the fact that "the ways were closed" (*Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 91).

Some Bohai troops fought against Khitan army in several castles, but Liao destroyed it later (Yu, 2000, p. 68). After victory Khitan officials deported part of the Bohai population from capital province in other places of Liao Empire (Parhaesa 1996: 92), for example, in Shanjin (Wittfogel 1949:69-70).

As result of destruction of Sin Liao and mass deportations, many Bohai people migrated in Koryo. Among refugees were persons from Khitan and Xia (Wittfogel, 1949, p. 420). But Koryo officials did not have good knowledge about population of Liao Empire and recorded in annals the Bohai people as Khitans or Xia.

Many modern Korean scholars believed that Bohai people migrated to Koryo because Da Yen-lin sent ambassadors and Sin Liao considered Koryo as related country (*Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 91-92). However, we don't think so - Koryo refused the support for state of Da Yen-lin. In the South Korea exist the opinion that contacts between Sin Liao and Koryo, migration of Bohai people in this Korean state, was "remained understanding about South and North States" in Korea (*Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 93). Yet many famous Korean professors did not consider this version and believe that in process of migration of Bohai population the geographical factor played a major role (*Parhaesa*, 1996, p. 93). We believe that its right, Koryo was located very close of Sin Liao.

All Khitan generals, who take part in destruction of Bohai rebellion, received awards from Liao Emperor (*Istoriia Zheleznoi imperii*, 2007, p. 99).

Usually Korean scholars considered the act of Yan Sianshi as main reason of destruction of Sin Liao, but objectively fate of state by Da Yen-lin was actually already a foregone conclusion. During the period of blocking Eastern Capital by Khitans, all rebels of Bohai population in other territories of Liao already did not existed. Moreover, many Bohai people did not take part in military conflict. They did not have interest to establishment of Bohai state. Koryo refused in support for Da Yen-lin, western and north Jurchens were destroyed by Liao army. Da Yen-lin had only Eastern Capital, which will be taking Khitans. Human and economic potential by Liao Empire outnumbered for many times, than possibilities of Da Yen-lin. Sin Liao could not be exist without support from another state.

Of course, in 12th C. Jurchen destroyed Liao Empire, but at that time Jurchen were nomadic tribes with strong social system and had excellent cavalry. Moreover, Jurchen used Khitan, Chinese and Bohai people in the war against Liao (Kozhanov, 1980; Malyavin, 1942). Da Yen-lin did not have nomadic cavalry and mass support of many Bohai people. His political motivations for establishment of his state did not receive mass support among Bohai population. Probably, economic motivation can be helpful, but it was not developed. Moreover, we can` see information, how Da Yen-lin worked with Chinese peasants, therefore he can`t receive support from Chinese too. As result, his rebellion had base only Bohai population in the Eastern Capital (but not from all, after rebellion Liao noted it and used Bohai population later), so Da Yen-lin can`t receive mass support. It was a main reason of Khitan victory.

Bohai rebellion of Da Yen-lin (1029-1030) in the Liao Empire

Of course, Bohai population rebelled later in 12th C. and occupied Eastern Capital again, but Bohai leaders can't create situation like Da Yen-lin. Therefore establishment of Sin Liao can be considered as most serious attempt of Bohai population to create their state.

In spite of this rebellion, Khitan officials accepted Bohai soldiers in Liao military troops later. Bohai military contingents played important role in resistance of Liao Empire against Jurchen army in 12th C. (Ye, 1979; Kozhanov, 1980). So, as we can see, Liao nobles positively considered Bohai population in Empire.

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