

The Historical Process and Political Value of the Intermarriage for Pacification between Liao and Xia

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Abstract—Political marriages have always been the important perspective in the study of ethnic relations, but academic circles seldom study the political marriages during Liao and Xia periods in Chinese history. Through sorting out and refining relevant historical materials, this paper describes the process of political marriages between Liao and Xia for more than a century, and explores the impact of intermarriage for pacification on the social, economic, cultural, political and military of Liao and Xia and its political value.

Keywords—intermarriage for pacification between Liao and Xia; alliance; peace-making marriage policy

I. PROBLEM INTRODUCTION

The intermarriages for pacification between Liao and Xia were established under the background of the complex era of the Northern Song Dynasty, Liao and Xia. The Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127A.D.) ruled the Northern Song Dynasty in the south of the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River basin, successively confronting Liao, Jin and Xixia. Liao(907-1125A.D.) was a feudal dynasty established by the Khitan as the main body in the Northern Song Dynasty of China during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms. Xixia (1038-1227A.D.) was named "Daxia" by Li Yuanhao when he founded the country in 1038, and it was also called "Xixia" by Song people because it was in the West. Xia State was founded in 1038, but it was established as a political institution from Tang Dynasty. In the fourth year (986 A.D.) of "Tonghe" in Liao Dynasty, Li Jiqian, from Tuoba branch of Tangut in Xiazhou, was descended to the Liao Dynasty and was soon crowned King of Xia by the Emperor Shengzong of Liao as the Xixia Wang, which was the beginning of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Liao and Xia. After experiencing Xingzong and Daozong of Liao until Emperor Tianzuo of Liao ruined the state (1125), Liao and Xixia had been in contact for more than 130 years.

II. PROBLEM ANALYSIS

In the 140-year history of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Liao and Xia, it seems that Xia was in the status of a subsidiary state of Liao. Xia had to accept the

canonization of Liao, pay tribute to Liao, propose actively, and provide support during the war. As the sovereign state of Xia, came forward to rescue the military crisis of Xia for many times. Liao and Xia always "combined marriage proposal (politics) and assistance (military) organically" to establish a restrictive and balanced pattern relationship between Liao, Xia and Song Dynasty. In history, there were three successful marriages between Liao and Xia.

A. The First Peace-making Marriage between Liao and Xia and its Political Value

In June 976 A.D., the Northern Song Dynasty's invasion of the Northern Han Dynasty led to the antagonistic relation between Song and Liao. In order to fight against the Song Army, Liao urgently needed new allies to contain and disperse the forces of Northern Song Dynasty. In 982 AD, Li Jipeng, the leader of Tuoba branch of Tangut in Xiazhou, surrendered to the Northern Song Dynasty, offering Yinzhou, Xiazhou, Suizhou, Youzhou and Jingzhou to Northern Song Dynasty. Li Jiqian, the younger brother of Li Jipeng, led some people to flee into the wasteland of Northeast Xia Zhou to resist the Song Dynasty and stand on their own feet, but attacked by the Song Army He failed because of his weak strength and could not recover the lost land of the five states. Therefore, Li Jiqian also urgently needed the alliance. Han Deyan, the bandit suppression commissioner in Southwest, used said that 'Hexi is the right arm of China (Northern Song Dynasty), folds its people to our prefecture, counterbalances Liu Han with Yinzhou and Xiazhou, and leads the troop's aids are futile. So, the return of Li is beneficial to our country, and we should accept his requests.' Khitan accepts his advice [1]. Therefore, the alliance between Liao and Xia was based on the common needs of both sides. Xia wanted to recover the lost territory of five states with Liao's assistance, and Liao wanted to seek Allies to contain Song's troops. Liao's first canonization to Xia strengthened the relationship between Liao and Xia. Xixia, who had just formed an alliance with Liao, took the initiative to "invite marriage", and Liao quickly agreed to it. In December of the fourth year (986) of Tonghe, Li Jiqian sent his envoy "came to Khitan and asked to marriage, the Khitan Lord promised it. In March (seventh year of Tonghe), he paid tribute to Khitan, and Khitan married him with the Yicheng princess of Khitan." In the seventh year (Tonghe), Xia gave tributes to

Khitan. The daughter of Prince Ye Ivxiang, who was honored as a princess, married to (Li) Jiqian. In August of the next year, Li came to thank Khitan, and Khitan gave three thousand horses as a dowry. Liao and Xia completed the first marriage.

The first peace-making marriage between Liao and Xia consolidated the consolidation and development of the good alliance between the two sides. Li Jiqian expressed his gratitude for Liao for marrying the "princess" and frequently sent envoys to pay tribute to Liao. "Jiqian gave tributes to Khitan every year since the marriage." Xixia's tribute to Liao's tribute has made a qualitative leap from quantity to quality in the fifteenth year of Tonghe (997 A.D.) The relationship between Liao and Xia has undergone subtle changes. The grades of the rewards of Liao to Xixia are also significantly higher than those of other tribute countries. In order to express his "affinity for Liao", Li Jiqian sent emissaries to Liao every time he fought with Song. The peace-making marriage between Liao and Xia, indeed achieved the goal of "controlling Song with Xia" for Liao Dynasty, which relieved the worries of the western border of Liaoning and laid a foundation for promoting the development of Liao Dynasty.

B. The Second Peace-making Marriage between Liao and Xia and its Political Value

In the 23rd year of Tonghe (1005 A.D.), Xia sent envoys to Liao to ask for canonization. Its purpose is to "borrow Khitan's voice to intimidate the internal (and subordinate) people" [2]. In September of the 28th year of Tonghe (1010 A.D.), Emperor Shengzong of Liao "sent his envoy to canonize Li Deming, the King of Xiping to be the King of Xia" [3]. During the reign of Li Deming, he pursued a policy of self-preservation. In order to consolidate and develop the alliance of Liao and Xia, Li Deming wanted to reunite with Liao. In the ninth year of Taiping (1029 A.D.), Li Deming sent an envoy to Liao to propose for his son Li Yuanhao. According to historical records, "Yuan Yu first married to the Wei Mu of Khitan. It was Deming who wanted to marry Khitan and sent an envoy to ask for a marriage, which was granted by the Lord of Khitan." But soon after the marriage was accepted by the Emperor Shengzong of Liao, he died in 1031. Emperor Xingzong of Liao, the son of Shengzong, continued to implement the policy of "combining Xia to counterbalance Song Dynasty". In December of the first year of Jingfu (1031), a clan woman was named "Princess Xingping" by Xingzong, who "married King Li Deming, son of Yuanhao. Yuanhao was appointed the imperial duke of Xia, imperial son-in-law commandant [4]."

Princess Xingping's marriage to Li Yuanhao is the second "political marriage" between Liao and Xia. The original intention of this marriage is to further consolidate the alliance of Liao and Xia to "counterbalance Song Dynasty with Xia". However, this marriage did not achieve the expected political effect, and instead became the main cause of the deterioration of relations between Liao and Xia. From the day when Princess Xingping married to Yuanhao to the twelfth year (1043) of Zhongxi, the relationship between Liao and Xia did not deteriorate, but it was not as thick as before. The gradual deterioration of the relationship between Liao and Xia could not be separated from the unhappy emotional relationship between princess Xingping and Yuanhao after she entered Xia

and the political factors of the gradual expansion of Xia during the reign of Li Yuanhao.

Firstly, Li Yuanhao was a lustful man by nature. In addition to formally taking seven ladies in his life, he also ordered messengers to buy several "Chinese Palace people" with "a lot of gold", and "left them severing around him" [5]. The five ladies of Li Yuanhao before Princess Xingping, except for Miemi, the other four were fateful. In October 1034, Yuanhao killed his biological mother, Wei Mu. In May 1035, he killed his princess Wei Mu. In January 1036, his princess Suo committed suicide, and in April 1038, Princess Xingping was seriously ill. "Yuanhao treated her very poorly, Xingping got sick for giving birth, but he did not come to see her." [6]

Secondly, after the succession of Li Yuanhao, the Xixia Dynasty became more and more powerful, and was more and more dissatisfied with its subsidiary status of Liao Dynasty. During the reign of Li Yuanhao, Xixia developed and reached its peak. Agriculture, handicraft industry and commerce had all made great progress. "The land in Xia is rich in grain, especially suitable for rice and wheat. Between Ganzhou and Liang Zhou, the rivers are used for irrigation. In Xing Zhou and Ling Zhou, there are ancient canals named Tangliang and Hanyuan, both of which are the branches of Yellow River. So thanks to the convenient irrigation, they do not worry about droughts and floods" [7].

Therefore, the second peace-making marriage did not prevent the deterioration of the relationship between Liao and Xia. In April of the thirteenth year of Zhongxi (1044 A.D.), when the Liao's government sent troops to attack the Western tribes that rebelled against the Liao Dynasty, Li Yuanhao secretly supported the rebels, thus repeatedly frustrating the Liao army. Consequently, Liao specially sent the envoy to Xixia to inquire about the Yuanhao. Instead of admitting his mistakes, Yuanhao was arrogant. "He claimed to be the Western Dynasty and said that Khitan was the north side." Xingzong was furious and he sent his army to attack Xia [8]. After Li Yuanhao's death, his son Li Liangzuo succeeded. The Emperor Xingzong of Liao reunited his troops in the Western Expedition for the shame of its failure in the war with Xixia, which lasted for five years.

C. The Third Peace-making Marriage between Liao and Xia and its Political Value

During the reign of Emperor Tianzuo of Liao, Princess Cheng'an married Li Qianshun, the leader of the Xixia Dynasty. It was the third peace-making marriage. According to *History of Liao-Xixia Records*, "Emperor Tianzuo ascended the throne and altered the reign title with Qiantong. Xixia sent envoys to congratulate him in the first year of his reign. The next year, Xixia came to ask for Princess Shang. He sent Li Zaofu and Tian Ruoshui to seek help from Liao because of the invasion of Song Dynasty. In the third year of Qiantong, Xixia sent ambassadors to invite Princess Shang again. In October, envoys came again to seek help. In the fourth and fifth year (1105 A.D.), Li Zaofu and other people came to Liao and begged for assistance. The Clan female Nanxian was ennobled Princess Cheng'an and married to Qianshun." From 1053 to 1105, it was a complicated historical process that how to

realize the intermarriage for pacification between Liao and Xia step by step in the half century.

In the half century after the end of the War between Liao and Xia, the relationship between Liao and Xia has been restored and improved. In the first month of the twenty-third year of Zhongxi (1054 A.D.), Li Liangzuo "sent envoys to tribute their local specialties to Khitan. The Khitan Lord thought Liangzuo was not sincere and told envoys that if your master remembers our country's prestige and does not forget the good marriage, then he should be respectful and obedient instead of contributing diligently. So, the Khitan Lord refused their gifts. In July, Li Liangzuo "sent envoys to propose marriage". Because Liao was still wary of Xia, Liao refused the proposal. During the period of Li Liangzuo's later years and his son Li Bingchang's reign, Xia began to encompass the relationship with Liao. The real recovery of the alliance between Liao and Xia depended on Liao. When Luowu City of Xixia was captured by Song Army, it was difficult for Xixia to recover its land, so he begged Liao for help. Liao promised to send 300,000 troops to help Later Song Dynasty attacked Xia again, Xia sent envoys to beg for help in Liao Dynasty, and Liao sent envoys into Song Dynasty to "interrogate the reason for sending troops" and reconcile them. Xixia is also more active than before to offer Uyghur monks, golden Buddha, *Vatican Sutra*, and the Betoye Buddhist Scriptures to Liao. Because the rulers of the Xixia Dynasty knew that the Emperor of Liao believed in Buddhism, they preferred to develop good neighborliness through religious ties. In October 1086, Emperor Li Bingchang of the Xixia Dynasty died, and his son Li Qianshun succeeded to the throne. When Li Qianshun was in power, Xixia was attacked repeatedly by the Northern Song Dynasty and Xia's national situation declined. Therefore, Li Qianshun continued to actively seek alliance with Liao in order to alleviate the pressure from Song Dynasty and win more support. From the sixth year of Longshou (1100 A.D.), Qianshun sent envoys into Liao to propose a marriage for three times. It was not until 1105 that Princess Cheng'an was married to Li Qianshun and the third marriage between Liao and Xia was completed. After entering Liao, Princess Cheng'an got along well with Li Qianshun and his other concubines. During this period, the relationship between Liao and Xia was consolidated and developed. Xia often sent envoys to Liao, to celebrate festivals and give tributes, or to announce and beg for help. Jinbing (soldiers of Jin State) of Jin State launched war with Liao for many times. In the second year of Baoda (1122 A.D.) in Liao, Jinbing attached Zhongjing and Xijing of Liao, and Li Qianshun sent 5,000 troops to assist Liao. In the third year of Baoda (1123 A.D.), facing the situation of Liao, Li Qianshun sent troops to assist Liao again, but was prevented by Jinbing. Emperor Tianzuo of Liao had no way to go, so Li Qianshun invited him to take refuge in Xixia. In the war between Liao and Song Dynasty, Princess Cheng'an and Shizi (crown prince) Ren'ai actively urged Xia to send troops to help Liao resist the Jin Dynasty. Shizi Ren'ai also volunteered for war and died of depression due to defeat. Ren'ai died in September 1125 and in the same month Princess Cheng'an "grieving for the extinction of Liao and deploring the

Shizi (Ren'ai), so she stopped eating and died." It also reflects the close relationship between Liao and Xia.

III. CONCLUSION

The relationship between Liao and Xixia "started from the natural contacts and exchanges between ethnic groups, and then it gradually became politically colored and became a political compliance relationship. The alliance of Liao and Xixia is the political needs of the two ethnic minority regimes. Of course, the great nationalist policies of the Song Dynasty also contributed to their alliance. This alliance is more mutually utilizable and unstable"[9]. It can be said that the three marriages between Liao and Xixia are the choices based on the political strategies. They were able to keep peace-marriage when the relations are relatively mild and friendly, and their economic and trade and cultural exchanges between the two sides also increased accordingly. As a political means, peace-making marriage is an important lubrication that promotes and maintains the relationship between the two sides. The role of peace-making marriage is to ease contradictions, stabilize the situation, expand the territory; strive for a covenant with the state; accelerate economic and cultural exchanges and development between the two sides; and promote the trend of national natural assimilation and integration [10]. Certainly they are the positive effects of peace-making marriage which strengthened the blood and kinship of different regimes. But it also has some negative effects. It has a strong emotional color, and the effects of political marriages are unstable. It is also a kind of sacrifice for women, and the fate of the princess cannot be decided by herself, which is worth pondering.

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