In trying to figure out Korea’s history, you have to learn to separate what has been proven versus the mythology of what people believe. Archaeologists have found tools indicating that the first settlements on the Korean peninsula occurred over a half a million years ago. (Ministry of Culture and Tourism Republic of Korea, 2002) These earliest inhabitants are not direct descendants of Koreans though. The reason that it is hard to figure out when the modern Korean history exists is that so far there is not a record to be found on when exactly the settlement actually happened. The only thing Koreans have to go on is myths that not been proven by archaeological proof. The founding of the first Korean Kingdom, according to myth is said to be about 2333 B.C.E. by a king called Dangun (or Dan-Gun, Tan-Gun). According to myths Dangun is a descendant of a god and a bear who was turned into a woman. (Life in Asia, 1997) Dangun is said to have established the Cho-Son (or Go Joseon) Kingdom in 2333 B.C.E. Cho-Son is said to have been located near modern day Pyongyang in North Korea. The Korean calendar starts at this date as well so most Koreans celebrate this as the year their country was created. Due to all of the myths surrounding his life it is unknown where he came from, but historians believe that Korea was first inhabited by Tungusic tribes around 3000 B.C.E.

According to *Guns, Germs, and Steel* the reasons for settling in an area in ancient times had to do with mainly climate, for agricultural purposes. There is archeological proof that the ancient people of Korea came with that purpose in mind. South Korean climate comes with four seasons. The average temperatures range from about 27°F in the winter to a high of about 80°F in the summer. There is plenty of precipitation as well with some cities receiving over 300mm (approximately 12 inches) of precipitation during July. (Korean Tourism Organization, n.d.)

The resources of ancient Korea were wild animals for hunting and plants that were native to the region. Since Korea is mountainous, rice is a common crop that seems to have been introduced roughly about 2700 B.C.E. Korea was heavily forested in the beginning as well creating opportunities for many different species of plants and animals.

Some of the obstacles to settlements, or even living in Korea in general had to do with their neighbors. Being located between Japan and China, there was invasions at different times from both countries. The ancient people of Korea had to worry about both invasion from other areas, as well as attacks from wild animals as well.

The last thing that I noticed in my research is that Korea is located on an East-West axis of the Fertile Crescent. With the latitude of the fertile crescent being roughly 36°N and Korea being along 38°N (found in a google search on googles main page) it allows for roughly the same climate as the Fertile Crescent. This serves as further proof of the diffusion of goods being easier to move in an East-West axis. Since rice was first domesticated in China roughly 8200 to 13500 years ago in China it would make sense that rice, now a staple crop for both countries, would move along an East-West axis. After China it even spread further along the East-West axis to India, Greece, Italy, and Northern Africa. (Rost, 1997)

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