Summary

# The Millennial History and Culture of Silla

## Culture

## Source Materials

Bokcheon Museum
Busan Museum
Catholic University of Daegu Museum
Central Buddhist Museum
Central Institute of Cultural Heritage
Changwon National University Museum
Cheongju National Museum
Chuncheon National Museum
Dongguk University Gyeongju Campus Museum
Foundation of Silla Cultural Heritage Research Institute
Gangwon Research Institute of Cultural Properties
Gaya National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage
Gongju National Museum
Gimhae National Museum
Gyeongnam Institute of Cultural Properties
Gyeongju National Museum
Gyeongju National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage
Gyeongsangbuk-do Institute of Cultural Properties
Haengso Museum of Keimyung University
Hanbit Institute of Cultural Properties
Hanshin University Museum
Jungwon Cultural Properties Institute
Jungwon National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage
Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation
Kukgang Archaeological Institute
Kyungpook National University Museum
Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art
National Museum of Korea
National Research institute of Cultural Heritage
Pusan National University Museum
Research Institute of Buddhist Cultural Heritage
Samgang institute of Cultural Properties
Sangju Museum
Sunglim Cultural Property Research Center
Ulsan Development Institute
Ulsan Institute of Cultural Properties
Ulsan Museum
Ulsan University Museum
Woori Research Institute for Cultural Properties
Yeongnam Institute of Cultural Properties
Ahn Byong-chan
Choi Eung-chon
Ham Sun-seop
Park Gwang-ryeol

## Notes

1. This compendium spans the birth of the Silla Dynasty to the emergence of the Goryeo Dynasty.
2. This compendium is divided into sections on history and culture based on the content of the relevant series of research books.
3. This compendium was compiled as a material for general education with professionalism.
4. The compilers were selected from among the compilers of *The Millennial History and Culture of Silla*.
5. The original manuscripts in Korean were proofread and checked by working level staff.
6. The translations into foreign languages were checked by native speakers who have majored in the relevant fields.
7. Photo materials were included in the relevant series of research books and source materials.
8. The marking of terminologies in foreign languages followed the general usage in academic circles. The marking of proper names in English followed the Rules on Romanization.

Summary

# The Millennial History and Culture of Silla

# Culture

GYEONGSANGBUK-DO

# On the occasion of publication

The Silla Dynasty, which lasted for one thousand years, accomplished the great feat of unifying the three ancient kingdoms on the Korean Peninsula into one, the first great achievement of the Korean nation, and created a splendid civilization during its heyday.

Silla displayed a unique openness and progressive spirit and exchanged culture and civilization with many other countries via the Silk Road. However, it is a matter of some regret that there has yet to be published a history book featuring a comprehensive and systematic survey of Silla's history. Thus, we at the Gyeongsangbuk-do government began the project of compiling Silla's history as inhabitants of the former domain of the ancient dynasty, with a historic sense of mission to explore the ethnic roots of the Korean nation.

*The Millennial History and Culture of Silla* is thought to be the largest series of books concerning Silla's history. The series approaches the history of Silla in chronological order, ranging from the emergence of Saroguk, which was the matrix of Silla, through the unification of the entire Korean nation and the peninsula into one and finally, to the foundation of Goryeo. The series was compiled in an easy-to-understand way and covers Silla's politics, economy, society, and culture.

The compilation and publication of a series of books about the 1,000-year history of Silla constituted a huge project, but we thought it was a worthwhile effort given the enormity of Silla's history and the status of the dynasty as the wellspring of our present culture. The compilation of the series has been a long slow march, taking five years from the symposium we held in 2011 to discuss how to write it. It is a laborious work composed of more than 12,000 pages in 30 volumes made with the concerted efforts of some 136 Korean specialists in Silla history. It is the result of the knowledge, expertise, and conscientious work of the members of the compilation committee, the editing committee, and the writing staff.

The compilation of the series is not simply a record of past events. The important thing is to reestablish our self-identity by reviewing a major part of the history of our nation and restoring our sense of pride. We believe that the fruit of this work will serve as a precious resource for the history education of future generations, and that it will open the way to introducing the history of the Silla Dynasty as an outward-looking state that engaged in cultural exchanges with many other states. We also believe that the myriad stories, myths, legends, and cultural heritage objects produced over a period of one thousand years will serve as an inexhaustible resource for our culture and tourism industries.

The world is changing day by day. If the Renaissance brought to an end the Dark Ages and the Industrial Revolution became the cornerstone of the foundation of modern society, then our own early 21st century can be said to be a period of profound cultural revolution. We live in a period in which material civilization is developing at an increasingly rapid pace under the impetus of smart technology. I believe that our genuine sense of identity in this era of high-end technologies is the very spiritual basis with which we can design the future.

The way people view history changes according to the prevailing situation, but one thing always remains unchanged, namely, the fact that the values of history become stepping stones that link the past with the present and define our future lives. This is the wisdom we can learn from history. Silla was a kingdom that disappeared long ago, but we know that we can live better in the present and the future by learning from its history and culture. Reviewing our past history and culture is a quest for our spirit and our soul.

After relocating the Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Office to Andong-Yecheon, we announced the opening of a new era. Timed to coincide with this new start, the completion of the compilation of *The Millennial History and Culture of Silla* assumes a special significance. I believe that this new series of history books will provide the spiritual and cultural groundwork for our province's journey into the new millennium. I hope that the work of compilation will serve as a prelude to another significant era for the citizens of our province and go a long way toward developing Koreans' historical consciousness. Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of those who have worked so hard on this project.

December 2016

Governor, Gyeongsangbuk-do

# On the occasion of compilation

During the first 700 or more years of its 1,000-year history, the Silla Dynasty, which began as Saroguk, one of the many polities of the Samhan Confederacy, grew as a kingdom competing for dominance with Goguryeo and Baekje on the Korean Peninsula. Thus, it would not be very wise to attempt to reconfigure the ancient history of Korea prior to Unified Silla with the focus on a specific country, and we can anyway obtain a truer understanding of the ancient history of Korea by approaching it from the perspective of the closely knit framework that included the Samhan and the Three Kingdoms (Silla, Baekje, and Goguryeo). Over the past half-century, research on the ancient history of Korea has made great strides forwards and considerable efforts have been made to compile materials on each kingdom or state that existed in the distant past based on the results of such research.

It is a well-known fact that scholars in North Korea have poured great effort into research on the history of Goguryeo in an attempt to present it as the most legitimate of the Three Kingdoms, while diminishing Baekje and Silla, for political purposes. As for us in the South, we have made ambitious attempts to organize the results of research on the history of Gaya and Baekje. Towards the end of the 1990s, the government launched the Gaya History Research Committee in the Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development. In tandem with this, the Korean Studies Institute of Pusan National University was assigned the mission of restoring the historic sites in Gimhae and organizing the results of the research on Gaya History and Archaeology up until the early 2000s. Furthermore, about a decade ago, the Chungnam Institute of History and Culture published the 25-volume Encyclopedia on the Cultural History of Baekje, which includes a 15-volume series of research books and the relevant literatures and archaeological materials, over a period of three years with the support of the Chungcheongnam-do Provincial Office.

In light of such a move, the Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Office's commencement of the compilation of *The Millennial History and Culture of Silla* in December 2011 in cooperation with the Gyeongsangbuk-do Institute of Cultural Properties is considered a meaningful attempt to reestablish the Silla Dynasty's splendid traditions. The history and culture of Silla formed the roots of the traditional local culture of Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, but it also laid the foundations of the history of the Korean nation. Studies of Silla history have played the role of a locomotive in research on the ancient history of Korea. *Samguk sag*i (History of the Three Kingdoms, 1146) and *Samguk yus*a (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms, 1281), which are regarded as the two leading historical materials for students of the country's ancient history, feature a large amount of content centered around Silla. Surviving inscriptions engraved on stone or other durable materials, which serve as ancillary historical materials, date predominantly from Silla. The number of unearthed wooden tablets that vividly testify to the internal situation of Silla is no less significant than the number of those originating from Baekje.

To summarize, it can be said that we know more about Silla than we do about Goguryeo and Baekje among the three kingdoms that coexisted on the Korean Peninsula. In its process of growth and development, Silla was much influenced by the other two kingdoms in most areas including politics and culture. This means that we can make an educated guess about the culture, objects, and social systems of Baekje and Goguryeo based on those of Silla. Researchers specializing in the ancient history of Korea are in the process of forming the groundwork for understanding the history of the three kingdoms based on our deep knowledge of Silla. We at this Committee took part in the project (the compilation of 22 volumes of research on Silla's history and culture and 8 volumes of relevant materials, plus two volumes of summaries in Korean and their three foreign-language versions) with a profound sense of mission, believing that the focus should be on restoring the country's ancient history rather than on inspiring the people's love of their native land.

We experienced many difficulties in pushing ahead with this huge project, which included the collection of 270 articles written by 140 researchers, with the result that the publication of the series exceeded the original schedule by two years. The relocation of the Gyeongsangbuk-do Provincial Office also contributed to the delay. We feel honor bound to take our hats off to those in the provincial office for the great patience and understanding they displayed to the very last minute. We owe a great deal to Messrs. Lee Ju-seok, Joo Nak-young, Kim Hyun-ki, and Kim Jang-joo, each of whom assumed the role of co-chair of the Committee as former vice governors for administrative affairs of the province. Particular thanks are due to Professors Noh Choong-kook, Ju Bo-don, and Lee Hee-joon and Mr. Lee Dong-cheol of the Gyeongsangbuk-do Institute of Cultural Properties for their painstaking efforts over the past five years as members of the Committee.

December 2016

Chairman, Committee for Compilation of *The Millennial History and Culture of Silla*

Lee Ki-dong

Summary

# The Millennial History and Culture of Silla

# Culture

## Contents

# Introduction

This book describes the culture of Silla over the course of ten centuries of its existence. Any discussion of culture is bound to be shaped by how one defines culture and what type of classification system is used. Culture, however, is rather difficult to define, especially if the definition is to be universally acceptable. Culture today refers to variable and manifold phenomena, and this term can have many different meanings depending on the individual who uses it. This is probably due to the increasing diversity and complexity of conditions and modes of living in today's world, and also due to the mass media that brought us into the awareness of such diversity and complexity. Defining culture in a few simple words—in such a manner that the ensuing definition can be understood by everyone—is therefore more difficult than ever. Doing so may even be an impossible endeavor.

That being said, the most commonly used classification system for phenomena in human societies is four-pronged, comprising politics, economy, society, and culture. Based on this system, culture may designate those phenomena that are neither political nor socioeconomic in nature. Of course, these four areas are closely related to one another and therefore not discrete categories by any means. Nevertheless, in concrete terms, culture may be defined as referring to all phenomena t hat lie outside t he political sector, which is related to the exercise of power, the economic sector, which rests upon the political realm, and the social sector, which concerns the structure of human groups. The problem with this approach, however, is that it fails to denote culture in concrete terms. In order to define culture concretely, it may be fruitful to turn to anthropology, a discipline whose main subject is constituted by culture more than any other aspects of human activities.

In 1871, Edward Burnett Tylor, an early pioneer in the field of anthropology, provided a definition of culture that was much quoted in later eras. According to Tylor, culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." With this definition, one is indeed able to form a rough idea as to what culture is. However, this anthropological understanding of culture places the focus on directly observable phenomena; it would fail to shed light on a culture such as that of Silla, which cannot be observed directly because the only sources available are written records. Furthermore, these written records mostly concern political events, scarcely containing any events of a cultural nature. Such a problem is even more apparent with records about early Silla. In

the absence of written records that can provide relevant insights, we are forced to rely on what archaeologists call culture—in other words, material culture—in order to describe the culture of Silla.

In 1929, the Australian archaeologist V. Gordon Childe offered his definition of culture, one that is still widely followed today. "We find certain types of remains—pots, implements, ornaments, burial rites, house forms—is constantly recurring together," he stated. "Such a complex of regularly associated traits we shall term a 'cultural group' or just a 'culture'." And in fact, the factors Childe mentions, such as pottery, other artifacts, burial structures, and house forms, are also key elements in the description of Silla's culture.

This long preamble has helped to explain the inevitability, in discussing Silla's culture, of using the results of archaeological research in areas where such research is possible—that is, when material remains are available—when selecting specific themes for discussion. Human settlement and house forms, tombs and burial customs, clothes and artifacts and external exchange are some of the areas upon which we shall concentrate. Meanwhile, other aspects of life in Silla that can be reconstructed through review of written records include religions, rites and ceremonies, scholarship and literature, everyday culture, art, science, and technology.

Once the themes have been selected, the next step is to determine our descriptive approach. The ideal method would no doubt be a chronological one, which ensures that changes occurring in each of the cultural areas over time are more easily understood. The problem, however, is that there are great disparities between material and documentary sources available for a given period of ime. Furthermore, the archaeological record itself is far from even across different periods. For example, material culture tends to diminish in diversity as we go back further in time, thus restricting the number of areas into which we can gain insight. Moreover, related written records vary widely from period to period, making a comprehensive description extremely difficult. A compromise would be to divide the history of Silla into several periods and adopt a synchronic focus for each theme within a given period, to gain a general sense of developments that took place in each area across time. This method seems the most promising if our goal is to form an overall picture of culture in a given period.

Silla's history as it unfolded over ten centuries is marked by a myriad of changes and vicissitudes. If nothing else, dividing Silla's history into several distinct periods will prove instrumental in forming a comprehensive



understanding of it. As such, this is the approach we will follow in this book. In the *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms] and the *Samguk yusa* [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms], we learn that the people of Silla themselves understood their own history in three distinct periods. However, these two crucial works differ in fundamental ways, both in terms of the criteria for periodization and in their emphasis. By merging the two perspectives, we can see Silla's history as being divided into four periods: Early Ancient, Middle Ancient, Middle, and Late. Of these four periods, the Early Ancient period was the longest in duration and contains two very distinct sections: the Saro-guk period and the Maripgan period. Therefore, the ten centuries of Silla's existence comprises five periods rather than four: Saro-guk (57 BC-356 AD), Maripgan (356-514), Middle Ancient (514-654), Middle (654-780), and Late (780-935).

This outlook is amply justified given how these five periods, each imbued with unique characteristics, can be clearly differentiated from one another. From a cultural point of view, however, the Middle and Late periods, although they are undeniably distinct from each other in some aspects, are less so in other aspects. As such, it is better to merge these two periods into one, the "Unified Silla period." In terms of both the quality and quantity of material culture-related sources, the Unified Silla period far surpasses earlier epochs, as surviving sources are much more abundant and detailed. Furthermore, culture-related documentary sources are concentrated almost exclusively in this time period. This book will thus be divided into two parts: one devoted to periods prior to Unified Silla and the other devoted to Unified Silla. In turn, the first part is divided into the Saro-guk, Maripgan, and Middle Ancient periods.

Dividing Silla's history into the Ancient Silla and the Unified Silla periods will of course influence the thematic focus. To begin with, the Saro-guk and Maripgan periods cannot be described based on documentary sources due to their extreme of such sources. As such, we will therefore, naturally examine material evidence as it is revealed through the archaeological records. In this way, concerning these two periods - although the emphasis will be placed on settlement and house forms, tombs and burial rites, clothes, artifacts, and external exchange, the description itself, due to the paucity of settlement-related evidence. It must be noted that the discussion of human settlement in the Maripgan period will rely exclusively on archaeological sites in the royal capital, cities outside the capital area,

Fig 1 Burial No. 130 at the Sara-ri site, Gyeongju

Fig 2 Gold Crown excavated from Seobongchong, Gyeongju

and borderland regions, as other evidence directly related to settlement is completely lacking in this period. The case is worse yet for the Middle Ancient period for which there is hardly any archaeological evidence at all. Settlement-related description is therefore completely left out for this period. Nevertheless, for the sake of consistency in the discussion of the Ancient Silla period, entries such as tombs and burial rites, clothes, artifacts, and external exchange are maintained for this period. Meanwhile, Buddhist art, introduced for the first time in this period, is discussed under a separate heading. A separate heading was also created for epigraphy, another characteristic of this period. Additionally, with the goal of providing a comprehensive picture of the history of epigraphy, such works from the Unified Silla period are also discussed in this section. In a similar vein, tombs and burial rites of Unified Silla are discussed together with those of the Middle Ancient period, as the former continued traditions begun in the latter.

For the Unified Silla period, the discussion is mainly based on documentary evidence, while also resorting to material and physical evidence. The discussion begins with the description of the royal capital and cities outside the capital area. This section also includes some discussions related to the urban planning of the royal capital, an area



Fig 3 Imsin Pledge stele, Gyeongju

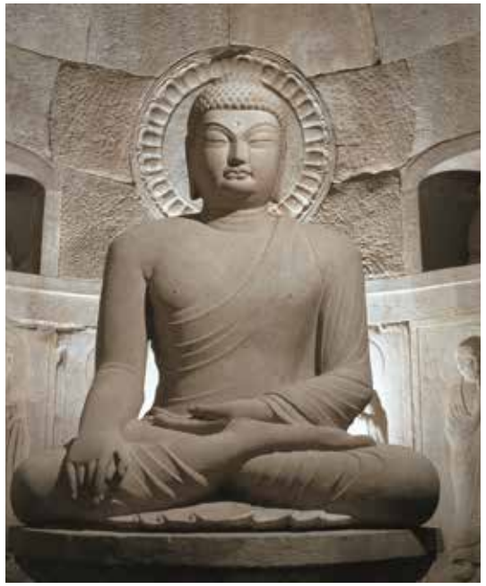
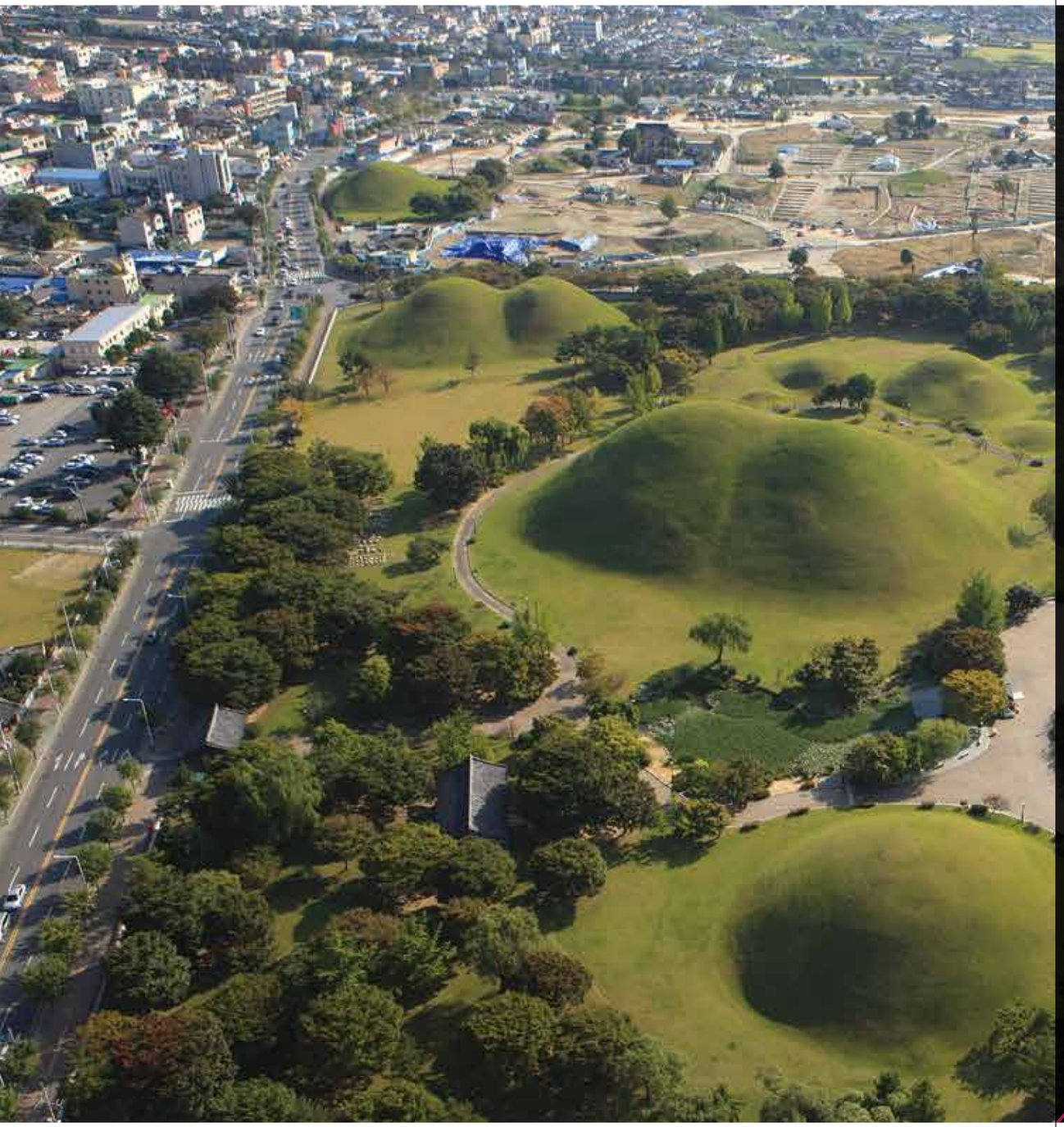


Fig 4 Restored seated Buddha at Seokgulam

that is not broached in the section devoted to the Middle Ancient period due to the negligible amount of available evidence. Next, as Unified Silla tombs are already covered in the section on the Middle Ancient period, a separate heading was devoted to them. The royal tomb section comprehensively covers the related history from the Saro-guk period to the Unified Silla period. This is followed by the discussion of religions, including native faiths, national rites and ceremonies, and Buddhism. A separate entry was added for an extensive discussion of Buddhist art. This is because Buddhist sculpture, architecture, and crafts are are the defining elements and consummate accomplishments of Silla's culture. Next is the entry on Confucianism and literature, followed by music then by science and technology. The science and technology section discusses astrology and calendar systems, weights and measures, medicines, manufacturing technology, and woodblock printing technology. The last three entries are dedicated to lifestyle—including the dress style of Unified Silla; the culinary and housing culture throughout Silla's entire history; agriculture; goods and products of Unified Silla; and external exchange and trade. The section on external exchange also covers the human exchange that took place during this period, as it can be traced through documentary sources.



Part 1

# Silla

**Burgeoning of Silla's Culture**
The Saro-guk Period

**Blossoming of a Golden Culture**
The Maripgan Period

**Embracing Foreign Cultures and Institutions**
The Middle Ancient Period

Chapter 1

# Burgeoning of Silla's Culture

## The Saro-guk Period







The Nakdonggang River Valley and basins of various large and small tributaries of this river occupy the majority of the Yeongnam region, where Silla and Gaya were based up until the mid-sixth century. Only coastal areas in the east and south of the region are outside of this river system. The cradle of Saro-guk, the predecessor of Silla, was the Gyeongju area, which later became the center of the Silla kingdom during the Maripgan period and continued to be so thereafter. Gyeongju was quite a remarkable location as an inland basin which was neither part of the Nakdonggang River Valley nor part of the coastal region. At the southern extremity of the Taebaek Mountain Range, Gyeongju occupied an area in the mid- to upper reaches of a small river—Hyeongsangang—that ran into the East Sea.

Gyeongju served as an important point of passage between the Nakdonggang River Valley and the coast. From Daegu, at a bend of the Nakdonggang River, people had to travel east beyond the Geumhogang, its tributary, to Yeongcheon, and then to Gyeongju in order to gain access to the southern and southeastern coastal areas and the Nakdonggang estuary. Meanwhile, for inhabitants of the southeastern coast, Gyeongju was a gateway to the inland regions. The location proved strategic for the ancient inhabitants of Gyeongju during the Jinhan/Byeonhan period when there was a lively trade, particularly in the form of iron exports—and it is likely to have favorably influenced the growth and development of Saro-guk.

Based on information gathered from excavation results at various tombs and other archaeological evidence available thus far, the transition of Saro-guk to an incipient tribal state appears to have occurred sometime between the late second century BC and the early first century BC. Documentary sources related to the birth of Saro-guk are mostly in the form of mythical or legendary narratives. According to these sources, a polity consisting of six villages became settled in the Gyeongju area around the early first century BC, and three family clans named Park, Seok, and Kim later moved to this area and fought each other for supremacy. These surnames are certainly those that were assigned in later eras. At any rate, these accounts suggest that there were successive waves of migration into the Gyeongju basin by groups of people of varying cultural backgrounds, at different points in time. These groups of people formed village communities that together made up Saro-guk which, thereafter, expanded steadily.

The basic structure likely consisted of several village communities grouped around a village that served as the seat of the tribal state. The number of village communities may then have increased progressively over time, as influxes of immigrants caused the population to grow, and as this population became more productive. But these remain conjectures; exactly how things played out is still unknown. Some historians believe that the six villages mentioned in written records are the precise number of village communities that existed in Saro-guk, while others are more skeptical, given the possibility that these accounts were generated entirely by people from later times.

Saro-guk continued to grow and eventually imposed itself as the dominant polity in the Jinhan Confederacy. The fact that Saro-guk tombs have yielded massive quantities and great varieties of iron tools and implements, which are, both practically and culturally, the most important items in ancient societies of this period, strongly supports this view. Later, toward the mid-second century, Saro-guk appears to have undergone a phase of accelerated growth. One reads, for instance, in the "Record of Han" in the "Account of Eastern Barbarians" in *Sanguozhi* [Records of the Three Kingdoms] that the Hanye (Han Hui in Chinese) people became a power to be contended with around this time, threatening the Han Commanderies in this area. Another important piece of evidence to this effect is the introduction of wooden chamber tombs in the mid-second century, which replaced the existing wooden coffin tomb. Wooden chamber tombs are not only larger in size than wooden coffin tombs from previous eras, also far surpass the latter in terms of both the quality and quantity of grave goods that they contain. What made such a leap possible was the progress in iron technology; major strides were achieved in technology for producing iron weapons as well as farming implements, spurring a sharp increase in productivity and accelerating the transition toward a more sophisticated social organization.

Toward the late third century, Saro-guk, though still known as Jinhan, sent independent trade envoys to mainland China, together with other peer polities. They thus received advanced Chinese institutions and goods through a direct channel, rather than through Han Commanderies such as Lelang and Taifang in the northern Korean peninsula. In this situation, Goguryeo undertook its southern campaign, conquering the



Lelang and Taifang Commanderies in 313 and 314, respectively. This change in the political landscape had immediate repercussions in the southern section of the Korean peninsula. Large numbers of former inhabitants of the Han Commanderies migrated south, and a movement for unification began within the Jinhan Confederacy. Concretely, this meant that Saro-guk successively subjugated neighboring polities. And Saro-guk's eventual absorption of most of the political base of Jinhan led to the emergence of Silla.

# 1 Settlement and Dwelling

## Pattern of Settlement

Gyeongju and its environs are traversed by multiple tributaries of the Hyeongsangang River. Streams in the river system of the upper Geumhogang River in nearby Yeongcheon, located west of the Gyeongju basin, empty into it, with the Daecheon Stream also flowing east toward it. The Gyeongju basin is also fed by the river system of the lower Nakdonggang River further south, and the Incheon, the upper tributary of the Hyeongsangang, also located south of it. Networks of streams formed by lower tributaries of the Hyeongsangang River are present in the north side of Gyeongju as well. Of these various river valleys, the one that extends east to west lies along the passage between the eastern coastal area and the Yeongcheon Stream, located in the Geumhogang River Valley at the tip of the southern ridge of the Taebaek Mountain Range. The Namcheon Stream in the southwest section of Gyeongju flows into the Hyeongsangang River. Meanwhile, the Dongcheon Stream, in the same river system as the Namcheon Stream, after passing through this general area, runs southeast into the East Sea via the estuary of the Taehwagang River. These various river valleys, all distinct from one another, were likely home to village communities. Although they had separate bases, these village communities in some way together formed a larger polity known as Saro-guk.





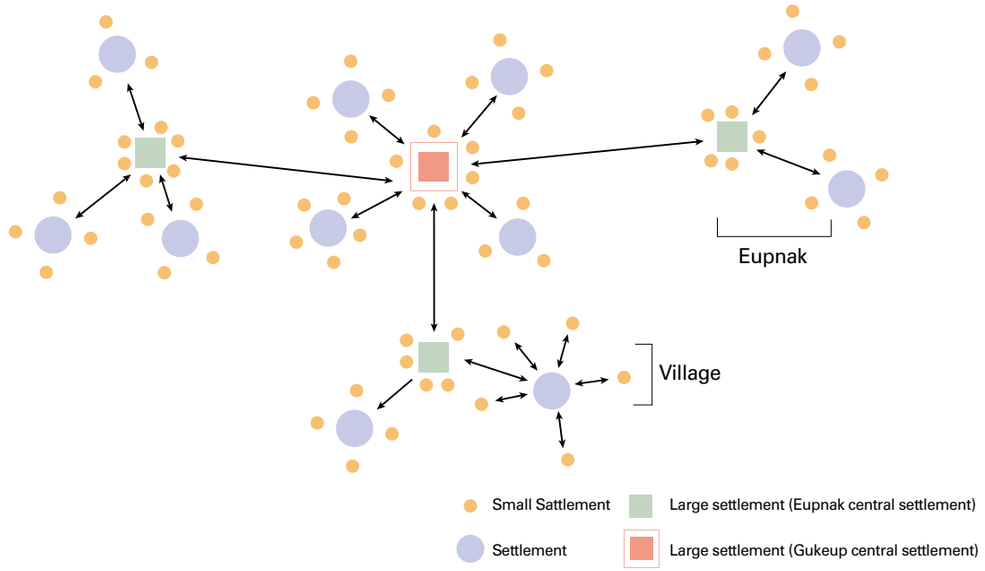



Fig 1 Pattern of Distribution of Human Settlement during the Saro-guk Period

However, how these village communities were structured is completely unknown. There are no written records on this subject, nor has there been any substantive archaeological research conducted on houses that could provide insights into the pattern of human settlement during the Jinhan/ Byeonhan period. Due to the dearth of direct evidence, we are forced to turn to indirect evidence such as the distribution of ancient tumulus groups, and draw upon this information to guess the distribution of villages and their structure. Thus, if we suppose that each of the tumulus groups from the Saro-guk period belonged to several villages, we can conjecture a pattern of distribution as shown in the diagram in <Figure 1>.

Between the late second century BC and the early first century BC, wooden coffin tombs were built in river valleys across the Gyeongju Basin. In roughly the same areas as where these clusters of wooden coffin tombs have been found, wooden chamber tombs were subsequently built along with other tombs of later eras. These areas therefore continuously served as communal burial sites over an extended period of time. The fact that

clusters of wooden coffin tombs are found throughout the Gyeongju basin suggests that the groups of people who built them were settled near these burial sites, and that this pattern of settlement most likely remained relatively unchanged into later eras.

Similar patterns are observed in other tumulus groups dating from the same period, across the Yeongnam region. Meanwhile, the fact that wooden coffin tombs were built even in places such as Indong-ri in Angang—an important crossroad but situated in a relatively insignificant location—may indicate that villages became more tightly networked than in previous eras, and the confederacy reached a greater level of cohesion. This, in turn, can be interpreted to mean that Saro-guk became a fully-fledged ancient statelet after having started out as a federation of villages. Based on the natural environment of river valleys in Gyeongju discussed above, the number of villages composing Saro-guk appears not to have exceeded a half-dozen.

## Village Sites and Iron Production Sites

Archaeological sites related to human settlement discovered thus far in Gyeongju and its environs include the village site in Hwangseong-dong and house sites near Wolseong. Meanwhile, the iron production site in Hwangseong-dong is a major example of an archaeological site related to production activity.

The Hwangseong-dong site is a comprehensive archaeological site containing vestiges related to housing and lifestyle, burial-related remains including wooden coffin and wooden chamber tombs, and the relics related to the production of iron tools and implements, occupying different sections of the overall spatial plan. This site is located in the alluvial terrace along the Hyeongsangang River, situated on the northwest side of the Gyeongju basin, at an altitude of about 30 m above sea level. The site extends north to south along the direction of the river flow. Burial sites are located in the northern section of this area, and house and ironwork sites are in its southern section. A total of forty-seven houses dating from the Saro-guk period have been identified at this place, and these houses can be divided chronologically into early and later periods.

There are seventeen early houses that were discovered in the southwestern section of the area. Most of them have a circular house plan.





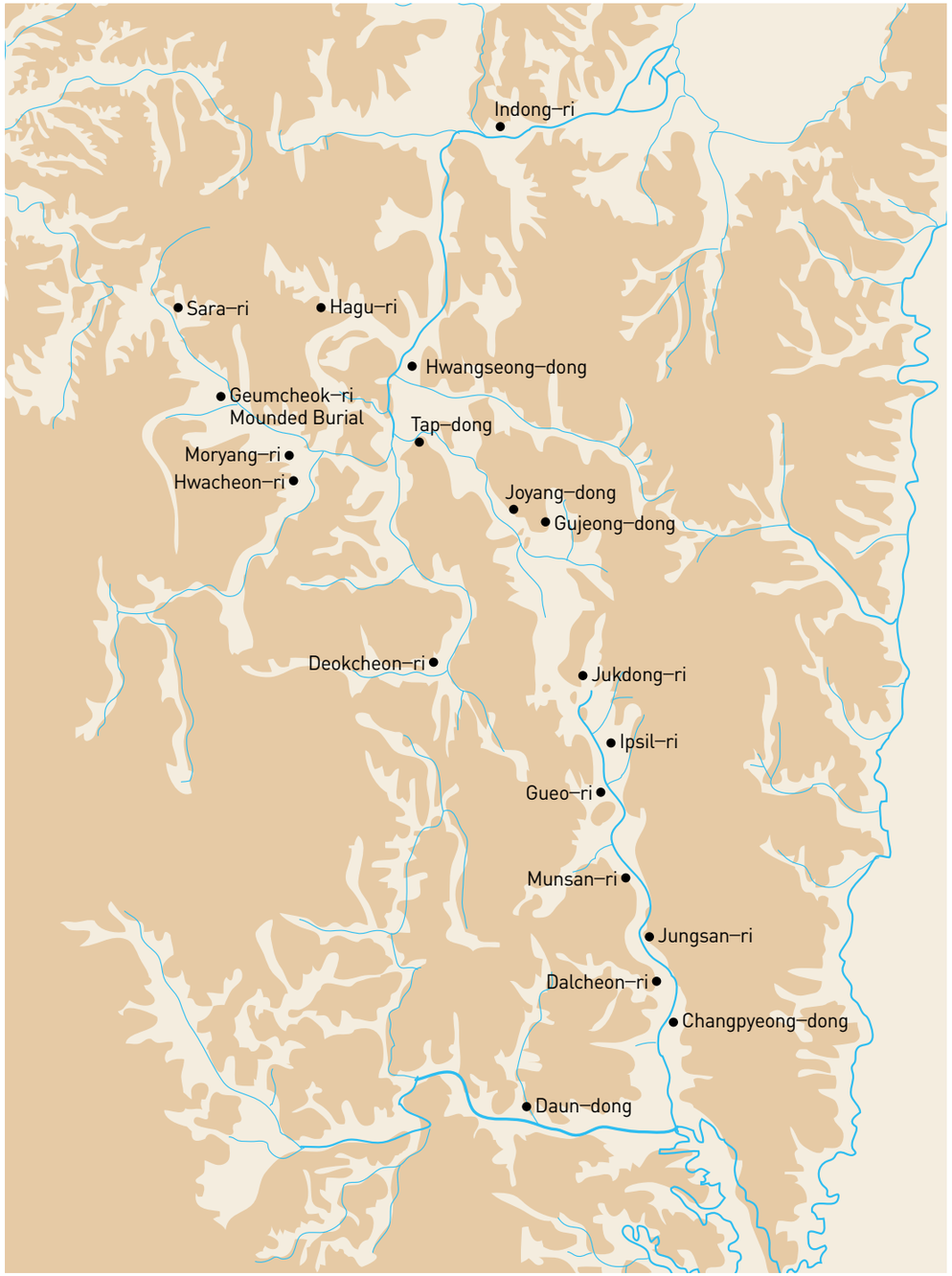



Fig 2 Saro-guk archaeological sites in the Gyeongju area

The majority are no larger than 20 $m^2$ in area, measuring 4~5 m in diameter, and are composed of shallow pits. Braziers appearing to have been used for tempering and forging of small tools and cooking are placed against the low-rising wall of the shallow pit houses. Some of them are rudimentary holes in the ground, and some others shaped like a stove. Near the stove in some of the houses were large stone pieces with obvious signs of having been used as anvil stones. Small lumps of iron, used to make tools, have been discovered at the sites of some of the houses that were burnt down. The analysis of these lumps revealed that they were made from iron sand. These sites are estimated to date back to the late first century BC to the first century AD. Dwellings during this early period, therefore, appear to have served both as homes and workshops for tempering and forging iron tools.

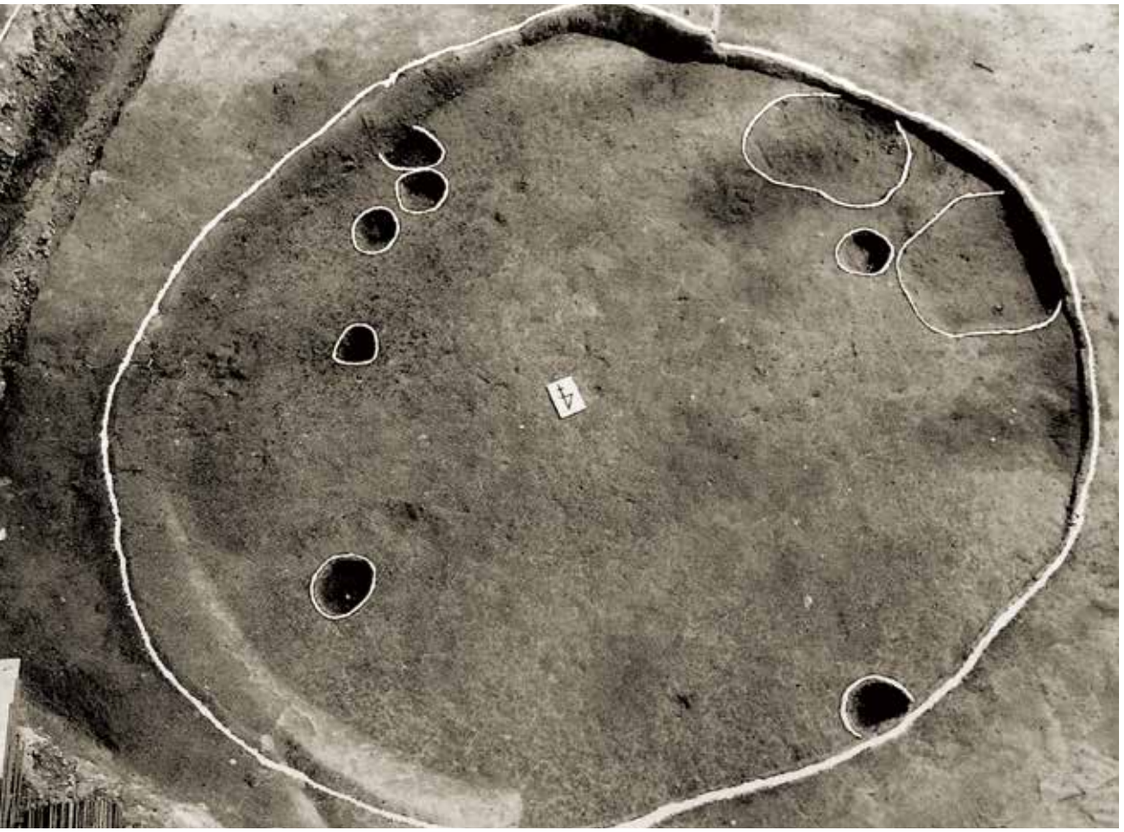


Fig 3 House-I-Da-1, Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju





Houses from the later period are distinct from early houses in that most of them demonstrate a rectangular plan with rounded corners. The houses were either shallow pit houses or above-ground structures, and the walls appear to have been made of earth, composed of clay mixed with straw. The houses were generally larger in size than those from the earlier period. The houses were generally larger in size than those from the earlier period, many of them measuring over 30 $m^2$. Inside the house, there was a stove and, on one of the walls, a smoke duct-like apparatus which seems to be part of a heating system. Artifacts unearthed from these dwelling sites were mostly pottery objects. The majority of the dwellings date from the early third century and later. Unlike in the preceding period in which houses served a dual function as a dwelling and an iron production workshop, these houses seem to have been used exclusively as living spaces. This probably means that by this time, iron production-related processes were carried out at outdoor workshops, using separate tempering and melting furnaces.

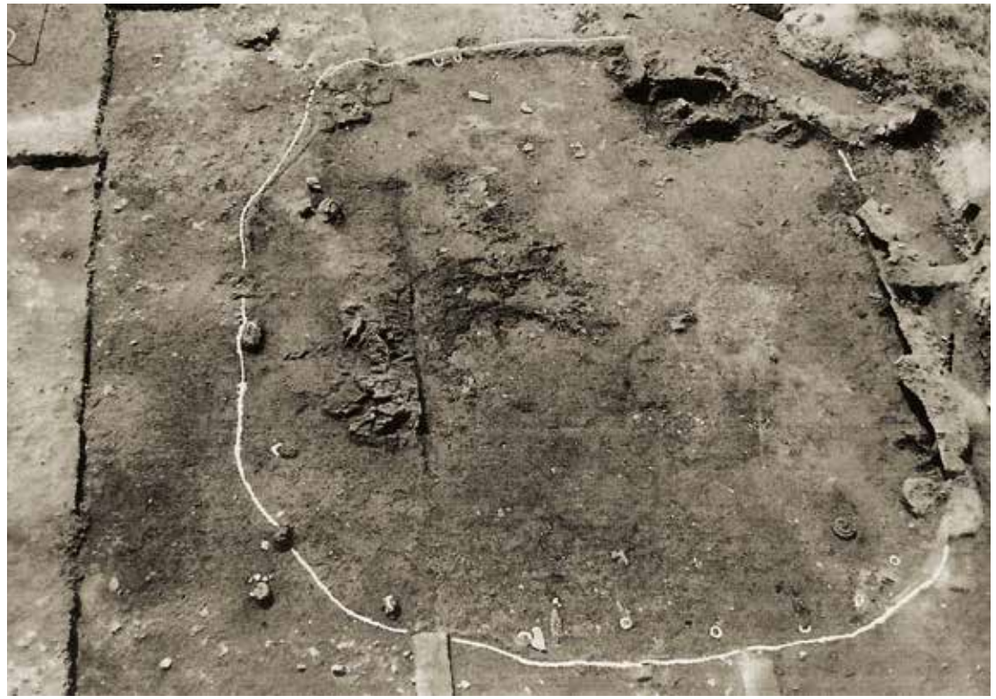


Fig 4 House I-Na-6, Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju

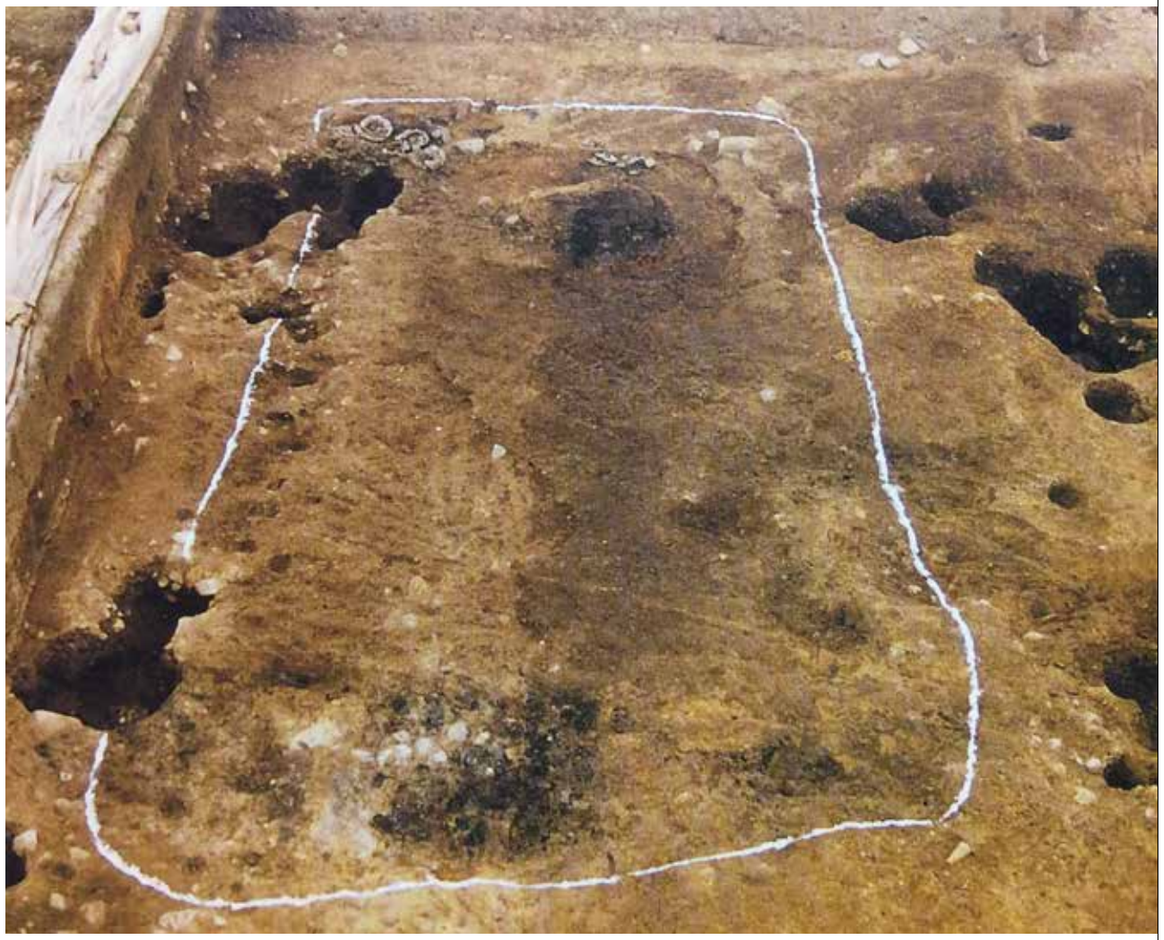


Fig 5 Dwelling No. 1, Saro-guk Period settlement site near Wolseong, Gyeongju

House remains and a pit dwelling site discovered between Wolseong and Gyerim indicate the former existence of a settlement in the general area. Remains of two houses and a pit dwelling dated to the Saro-guk period were identified. One of the two houses had a rectangular plan with rounded corners, measuring about 700 cm × 340~400 cm. Artifacts gathered from these dwelling sites are estimated to date from the early to late third century. These dwellings were destroyed at the time of the construction of Wolseong and its moat, indicating the existence of a village in Wolseong prior to this event. Villages are likely to have existed in the level area lying





north of Wolseong as well as within Wolseong.

In the iron production zone of the Hwangseong-dong site, fragments and remains of smelting furnaces for the production of pig iron were absent. This place seems to have been used mostly for production of iron items, as evidenced by melting and tempering furnaces used for casting and forging iron objects that were found there. Remains of early forging equipment were discovered inside dwellings of the Hwangseong-dong archaeological site 1-Da, dating from the early part of the Saro-guk period, as stated above. The single-most important characteristic of village remains from this period is the lack of distinction between the living space and the production space.

Among the iron production equipment from the later period are tempering furnaces in outdoor locations and small, standalone melting furnaces. What this demonstrates is that, as a result of improvements made in iron processing technology toward the late second century to the third century, a subdivision of the production process occurred, with the melting, refining, and tempering or annealing processes performed separately.

Tempering furnaces from the later period were elliptical in plan-shape, measuring 50~100 cm in the longest diameter. The furnace was placed at the center of a shallow pit dug in the ground, also elliptical in shape. The ground was covered with a layer of charcoal, and a large piece of stone, visibly used as an anvil, was found amid scraps of slag. The melting furnace was constructed by digging an elliptically-shaped pit about 100 cm in the longest diameter in the ground. The bottom of the pit then filled with soil mixed with furnace wall fragments. Next, another pit close to 50 cm in diameter was dug and the wall was finished using clay mixed with straw. Anvil stones, iron scraps and large amounts of slag have also been discovered next to melting furnaces of this type. Some of the pieces of slag, hardened into the form of a water drop, suggest that the melting work performed was rather modest in scale. Other types of furnaces such as refining and steel-making furnaces have been discovered as well.

In sum, the excavation of the ironwork site of Hwangseong-dong revealed that by no later than the third century, there existed in Saro-guk a large and diversified iron tool industry with a high level of division of labor. Concerning blasting, large blast pipes with a considerable diameter have been discovered also at the Hwangseong-dong site. Blast pipes of this type remained continuously in use through to the Unified Silla period.

# 2 Tombs and Burial Customs

## Wooden Coffin Tombs of the Early Saro-guk Period

During the early part of the Saro-guk period—from the first century BC to the early second century AD—burial structures mostly took the form of a wooden coffin tomb. This burial method, quite similar to the one practiced today, consisted of digging a hole in the ground, interring the body of the deceased in a wooden coffin, and then covering the coffin with earth in a manner to form a shallow mound. Although these tombs are referred to as wooden coffin tombs, no wooden coffin has ever been discovered in the Gyeongju area. Notwithstanding, based on the information gleaned from the wooden coffin discovered in 1988 in Daho-ri tomb No. 1 in Changwon and other related archaeological evidence, it is presumed that two different types of coffins were used during this period. Coffins of the first type, known as 'log coffins', are made by vertically splitting a large tree trunk which is cut to be slightly longer than the body of the deceased and hollowing it out. After resting the body of the deceased inside the hollow, the two halves of the tree trunk are re-joined. Coffins of the other type are caskets built with wood panels.

These two types of coffins are surmised to have been used by people of different origins or traditions and must have differed in terms of the burden shouldered by the community. Currently, the main physical evidence for the utilization of log coffins is provided by wood fragments discovered in a tomb at Daegok-ri, Hwasun, which is dated to the early Iron Age and believed to be from a log coffin. If log coffins were as widespread as they are indeed assumed to have been, coffins of this type probably date back to an earlier time and are likely to have been used by early inhabitants, i.e. natives of the area. With wood panel coffins, on the other hand, there is very little evidence to go on in terms of tracing them to an earlier origin. However, given the prevalence of wooden coffin tombs in the northwestern Korean peninsula, they are generally associated with immigrants from this region.

Tomb No. 38 of Joyang-dong, frequently referenced as an example of an early Saro-guk burial structure, has a rectangular pit measuring 258 cm × 128 cm in length and width and 150 cm in depth. The estimated dimensions of the wooden coffin are 190 cm in length, 65 cm in width and 30~40 cm in height. The extreme depth of the grave pit is without a doubt an expression of the desire to securely seal off the sepulchral space. However, there is a clear trend toward gradual shallowing of the grave pits over time.

The grave pit extends east to west with the head of the deceased placed at the east end. This way of positioning the grave pit and the remains continued at least until the Maripgan period. Meanwhile, there is no known example of wooden coffin tombs that can inform us about the shape or size of the mound. The ditch encircling the grave pit, however, allows us to indirectly guess its general shape. Of the sixteen wooden coffin tombs at the Deokcheon-ri site, four large ones have ditches that are in a straight line, a U-shape, or a rectangle. The ditches that form a U shape or a rectangular shape were longer on the sides that were parallel to the long sides of the grave pit, suggesting that the mound had an outline shaped like a long ellipse or rectangle. Based on the path of the ditch the mound of a wooden coffin tomb is estimated at up to 800-900 cm in length and 600-700 cm in width. These estimates being the largest possible dimensions, the mounds could also have been much smaller. Although there is no information available to estimate the height of the mounds, it is possible that they were flat at the top, unlike today's burial mounds, which have a round projected top.

A representative example of a wooden coffin tomb dating from the later part of the early Saro-guk period is provided by Sara-ri tomb No. 130. The grave pit in the shape of a rectangle with rounded corners measures 332 cm long, 230 cm wide and 100 cm deep. The coffin that was lodged inside the

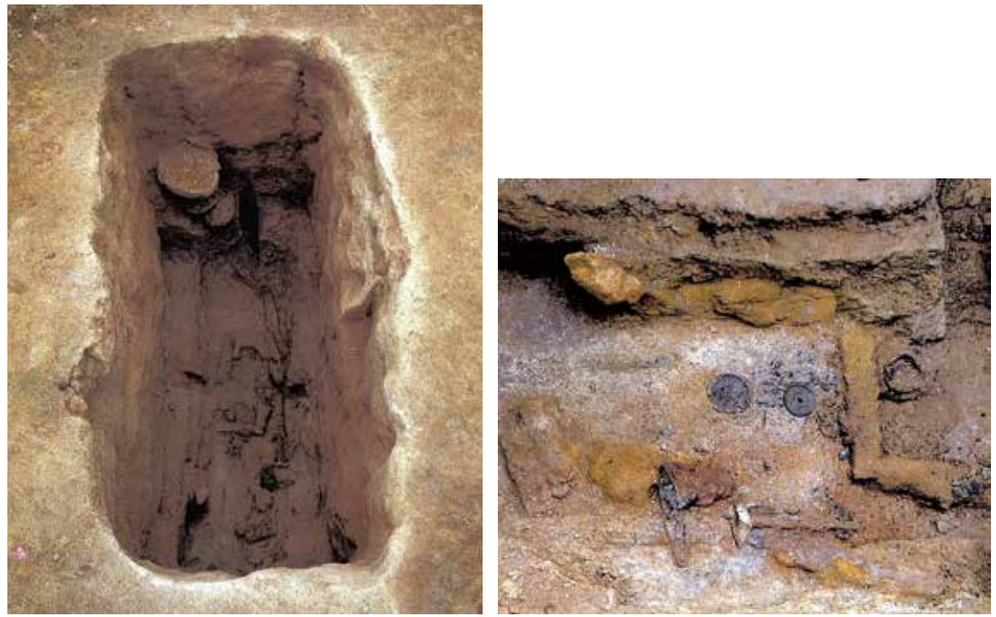


Fig 6 Joyang-dong tomb No. 38

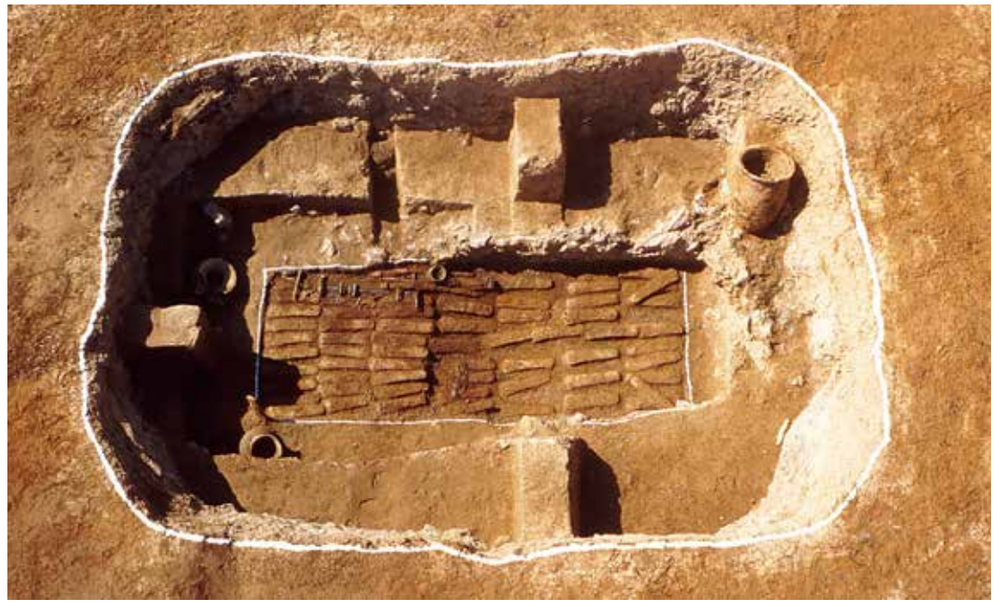


Fig 7 Sara-ri tomb No. 130





pit probably measured about 205 cm long and 80 cm wide. The imprint left on the soil covering the bottom of the pit suggests that the coffin was made with wood panels that were fitted in such a way that two of the lateral panels on the opposite side from each other had overhanging edges. In the bottom of the grave pit, at the waist level of the body of the deceased, there was another small pit (yogaeng) that was 74 cm long, 60 cm wide, and 15 cm deep for the offering of grave goods. A large quantity of grave goods was placed also in the gap between the coffin and the walls of the grave pit, reflecting an increasingly elaborate burial custom. The only thing this tomb lacks compared to the wooden chamber tombs that came later is an outer shell enclosing the grave goods around the coffin in the form of wood panels placed along the walls of the grave pit. Sara-ri tomb No. 130 thus stands out among tombs of its generation in its pioneering style as a forerunner of a new generation of tombs to come.

Aside from wood coffin tombs, there existed also another type of tomb

Fig 8 Jar Coffin

in early Saro-guk: jar coffin tombs. Jar coffin tombs are usually found scattered between wood coffin tombs. Since jar coffin tombs were not a dominant type in this period, they will be only briefly described here within the discussion of wooden coffin tombs. Jar coffin tombs are generally made by joining two identical jars, although there are exceptions, such as Gangbyeon-ro tomb No. 1, which is made of a single jar <Fig 8>. In later eras, however, jar coffin tombs were increasingly constructed by pairing jars of non-identical types. For example, a jar with two knobs on either side was commonly paired with a jar with a wide mouth or a jar with a handle. Sometimes, an earthenware steamer-like wide-mouthed short jar was placed between two regular jars as well.

Jar coffin tombs from the Saro-guk period were mostly about 1 m in length and were laid in the grave east to west in a manner parallel to the contour line. The grave pit was dug to a size slightly larger than the jar coffin. The tombs must have been marked by some sort of aboveground structure, but no material evidence which can prove the existence of such structures has ever been found.

## Wooden Chamber Tombs of the Late Saro-guk Period

Wooden chamber tombs are quite distinct from wooden coffin tombs both in terms of structure and in the amount of grave goods that they contain. The emergence of wooden chamber tombs coincides with the strengthening of the political power of chieftains of various village communities in the area. Funerary rituals became grander and more sumptuous as a result, and they needed tombs that were large enough to house the increased amount of grave items buried with the dead. In the preceding section, we saw that there was a significant difference in size between Joyang-dong tomb No. 38, an early Saro-guk wooden coffin tomb, and Gangbyeon-ro tomb No. 1 at Hwangseong-dong <Fig 9>, a wooden chamber tomb from the late Saro-guk period (338 cm × 414 cm × 39 cm in dimensions of the grave pit with the coffin estimated to measure 206 cm × 275 cm). The fact that wooden chamber tombs of such large proportions appeared in the mid-second century strongly suggests that there was a sudden and major change in the ancient society around this time. However, as was the case with wooden coffin tombs, this could also have been the result of the accumulation of





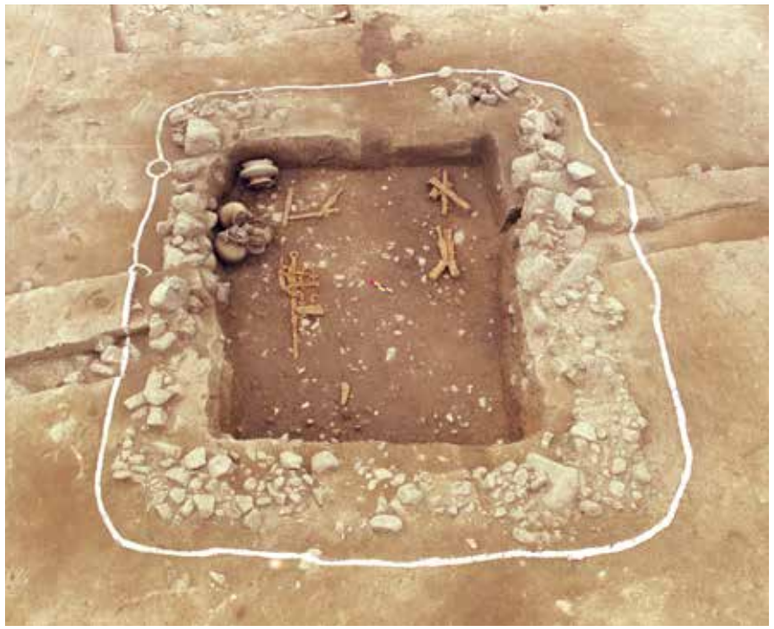


Fig 9 Gangbyeon-ro tomb No. 1 in Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju

subtle and less noticeable changes in burial structures that took place over a long time, rather than the result of a sudden and major change.

One of the most remarkable changes that occurred to wooden chamber tombs over time is the sharp reduction in the width-to-length ratio concerning both the grave pit and the wooden chamber. Most importantly, the grave pit became increasingly shallow. This strongly suggests that the wooden chamber was at the aboveground level, and the mound covering the wooden chamber became prominently visible, thereby serving ostentatious purposes.

Wooden chamber tombs have plans that are either almost square or shaped like a rectangle, or a long, narrow rectangle. Tombs with a nearly square plan are believed to predate the two other types. At any rate, tombs with a rectangular or a long rectangle-shaped outline from the later period usually contain a secondary chamber.

There is very little evidence that can offer clues as to the appearance of the mound of a wooden chamber tomb. Notwithstanding, the remains of a tomb that was surrounded by stone retaining slabs were discovered at the Jungsan-ri archaeological site in Ulsan. The pit of this stone-surrounded

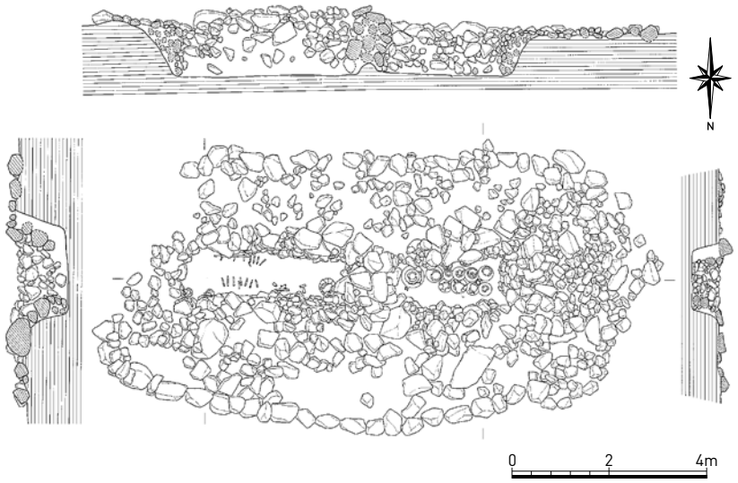



Fig 10 Jungsan-ri tomb A-26 in Ulsan, a long and narrow wooden chamber tomb with a grave good chamber and retaining stone slabs.

wooden chamber tomb (Jungsan-ri I A-26) with two chambers has a long rectangle-shaped plan, measuring 840 cm on the longest side. The overall size of the tomb is 1480 cm by 760 cm. Meanwhile, the stone retaining slabs discovered at this place were in the shape of a long, narrow rectangle with rounded corners <Fig 10>. The fact that stone slabs were utilized for lateral support from an early stage on suggests that wooden chamber tombs were meant to be built with an elevated mound from the beginning.

## From Wooden Chamber Tombs to Stone-covered Wooden Chamber Tombs

That a new burial structure known as "stone-covered wooden chamber tombs" was used during the Maripgan period for the interment of deceased members of the Gyeongju-based ruling class is a well-established fact. This highly original structure received much attention as to its origin from early on. The dominant view has been that this burial structure has a non-local origin and was possibly developed under the influence of Goguryeo stone tombs. However, more recently, a growing body of archaeological evidence has demonstrated that wooden chamber tombs native to the Gyeongju





area eventually evolved into stone-covered wooden chamber tombs after progressive transformation.

If indeed stone-covered wooden chamber tombs had an endogenous origin, in other words, if they derived from native wooden chamber tombs, the transition between the two types of tombs would not have occurred suddenly or over a short span of time. The earliest variants of wooden chamber tombs in the path of transition toward stone-covered wooden chamber tombs have stone piles, usually between the wooden chamber and the grave pit (known as "tombs with stone piles on four sides" and more recently renamed "stone-surrounded wooden chamber tombs"). These were followed by tombs with stone piles above the wooden chamber. Tombs of a third type, which are also the last in the stage of evolution toward stone-mound tombs, have an aboveground stone mound covering a wooden chamber located also aboveground. Tombs belonging to at least the earliest of these three types were constructed during the late Saro-guk period.

Between the mid-second century, when wooden chamber tombs were first built, and the mid-third century when those with a secondary chamber first appeared, examples of stone-surrounded wooden chamber tombs are limited to a few tombs in tumulus clusters located in level land areas. Yet from the late third century and onward, tombs of this type are also seen in tumulus clusters in hillocky areas, in other words, locations where it is more difficult to procure rocks. Thus, the pattern of transition toward stone-covered wooden chamber tombs becomes progressively clearer from this point forward. The stone-covered wooden chamber tomb at Masan-ri, Heunghae-eup, Pohang is a case in point. The wooden chamber of this tomb, with its bottom covered with small pebbles, is surrounded by stone piles on all four sides. This tomb is an early example of a tomb of this type, quite distinct in style from the preceding generation, known as stone-surrounded tombs. The tomb, perched at the summit of a small knoll, closely neighbors a wooden chamber tomb with a secondary chamber for grave goods laid east to west, which is situated about 3 m to the north.

The two tombs look as though they were twins. This tomb with stone piles around the four sides of the wooden chamber is likely to date from the early fourth century, at the beginning of an accelerated period of transition toward stone-covered wooden chamber tombs.

The main chamber of the Masan-ri tomb is at the center of the grave pit, and a secondary chamber and a grave goods chest are placed next to

Fig 11 A large stone-covered wooden chamber tomb at the Masan-ri archaeological site, with stone piles on all four sides of the chamber, Pohang

the two narrow sides of the main chamber. The grave pit is 800 cm long, 320 cm wide, and 50 cm deep. Pebbles that are 10~20 cm in diameter are found across the bottom of the grave pit except in the secondary chamber to the west and below the east wall against which a grave goods chest was placed. The main chamber is surrounded by four to five layers of thin stone slabs that are about 60 cm in width. The gap between the grave pit walls and the main and secondary chambers is filled with smaller stone slabs and crushed stone, 15-30 cm in width. Based on the examination of soil layers inside the main and secondary chambers, the ground sank only slightly, suggesting that no stones were placed on top of the wooden chamber. The wooden chamber at the center appears to have been about 290 cm by 110 cm. Based on the location of gold earrings, the body of the deceased seems to have been positioned with the head toward the east.

Between the main wooden chamber and the grave goods chest in the east, there is a low-rising divider wall that is 20 cm in height and 80 cm in width. A pebble covering is absent in the area at the foot of the east wall where grave goods were placed. A divider wall was absent between the main chamber and the secondary chamber on the west side. The bottom of the secondary chamber was left bare with directly exposed soil. The secondary chamber, measuring close to 190 cm long and 195 cm wide, is about 85 cm wider than the main chamber. In relation to the body of the deceased, the grave goods chest is positioned above the head and the secondary chamber toward the feet.





## Burial Customs in the Saro-guk Period

Funeral customs practiced in Silla are almost entirely enshrouded in mystery, as written records provide very little information on this subject. The only piece of relevant information is found in *Sui Shu* [Book of Sui], which states that people in Silla observed a mourning period of one year for a deceased family member. Burial customs, however, can be inferred to a large extent from the tombs of this period. Tombs are windows into burial rituals, one of the most important rites of passage in the life of an individual, as well as burial methods. Although exact details about the burial process will no doubt elude us, we can nevertheless gain some knowledge about it based on various clues offered by tombs and the artifacts contained therein. For example, the reconstruction of the process of building a wooden coffin tomb, the main type of tomb built during the Saro-guk period, reveals that this process consists of six stages: the selection of the burial site and preparation of the ground; digging the grave pit with or without a grave goods pit; resting the coffin in the pit; placing reinforced earth around the four sides of the coffin and on top of it; filling the pit with soil; and building the soil mound. The process was essentially the same as that for building wooden coffin or chamber tombs in ancient China or the way in which wooden coffin tombs were built in Joseon for Confucian-style burials. However, wooden coffin tombs surviving in the Gyeongju area are not sufficiently well preserved to yield insights into ritual proceedings that took place at each stage of burial. As such, we will turn instead to the example of the wooden coffin tomb at Yongjeon-ri, in nearby Yeongcheon.

In Yongjeon-ri tomb, places where items were buried were ① the yogaeng, the pit at the level of the waist of the body of the deceased ② the bottom of the grave pit beneath the coffin, ③ inside the coffin, ④ the bottom of the grave pit outside the coffin, ⑤ inside the reinforced earth, ⑥ on top of the coffin, above the layer of reinforced earth that covers it, ⑦ inside the soil fill, and ⑧ inside the mound just above the upper edge of the grave pit. Accordingly, grave goods found in ① and ② are likely

to be offerings made during the ritual held when the grave pit, including the yogaeng, was completed. Items in ③, meanwhile, would be clothes, shrouds and such worn by the deceased, and those in ④ and ⑤ would be offerings from the ritual after the laying of the coffin. Grave goods in ⑤ may also be from the ritual associated with the stabilization of the structure with reinforced earth. Those found in ⑥ are possibly related to the ritual held after covering up the coffin with reinforced earth and those in ⑦ to the rite during the process of filling the grave pit with soil. Finally, artifacts discovered in ⑧ appear to be related to the ritual held after the grave pit was covered and before the mound was built. Furthermore, artifacts found in ⑥ could have been placed there following a ritual having to do with chwito, the auspicious soil interred with the dead, and those in ⑧ to a pyeongto rite, held after filling the grave pit up to the ground level.

This tomb contained mainly ritualistic objects and everyday items were notably absent, as though burying these items with the dead for use in the afterlife had not yet become customary. However, it is also possible that earthenware items such jars with oxhorn-like handles and pouch-shaped jars buried in large quantities may have been intended for use in the afterlife. At the same time, given that they were found alongside fragmented lacquerware and that lacquerware dishes were used mainly for ritualistic purposes, these earthenware items appear to be offerings rather than items intended for practical use.

As for wooden chamber tombs of late Saro-guk, the construction process must have been similar to the one used for wooden coffin tombs. The selection of the burial site and burial ground must have been followed by the digging of a grave pit. The body of the deceased was then laid into the grave pit, and reinforced earth was placed around the wooden chamber.

Building the soil mound was the final step in this process. Since the wooden chamber emerges above the ground (unlike the wooden coffin laid underground) the step of filling the grave pit to the ground level was not a part of the process. In early wooden chamber tombs, reinforced earth was used only along the four lateral sides of the wooden chamber. The mound was either built directly over the aboveground portion of the wooden chamber or after covering it with soil. In comparison, in wooden chamber tombs from the later period, reinforced earth was also used on top of the chamber to completely seal it before the mound was built over it. It is all but certain that a separate ritual was held at each of these steps, just as it was the case with wooden coffin tombs. Such ritualistic intercessions must have taken place at least at the following





Fig 12 Artifacts and scenes from the excavation of s wooden coffin burial, Yongjeon-ri site, Yeongcheon

points: upon selection of the burial site, after a grave pit was dug, during the setup of the wooden chamber, at the time of interring the body of the dead and grave goods, after covering up the chamber, during the building of the mound, and at the completion of the mound.

Concerning grave goods in wooden chamber tombs, there is an increase over time in the number of everyday objects buried along with clothing, ritualistic objects, and offerings. Wooden chamber tombs from the later period also tend to have a secondary chamber for storing everyday items for use in the afterlife, either in the form of a compartment created by a divider wall or a separately built chamber. In tombs without a secondary chamber, these necessities of the afterlife were placed near the feet of the dead. In addition, the placement of grave goods appears to increasingly follow a set pattern. Offerings to the dead such as the goblet are mostly found near the head of the deceased. This pattern of distribution of grave goods observed in the Maripgan period became a standard throughout the existence of Silla.

# 3 Clothing and Jewelry

Clothing is one of the three most essential items for sustaining human life, along with shelter and food. Not only are clothes a necessity, they also contribute to a person's individual and distinctive appearance. For early human beings, clothes were merely protection from cold weather, allowing them to maintain a stable body temperature. Eventually, as cultures and societies developed, people began to dress and accessorize increasingly for aesthetic reasons, to indicate their social status or identity, or to express their individual personality.

Clothing and jewelry in ancient East Asian societies were faithful reflections of their wearers as well as the society in which they lived. Members of the ruling elite in ancient societies dressed in sumptuous garments made with fine fabrics to show their exclusive social standing. Clothes were often codified at the level of the state according to social station. Certain types of fabrics and colors were reserved for specific social classes in a manner to clearly indicate the status of a person through their dress.

## Clothing in Written Records

Written records offer little information related to the way people dressed in Silla. The little we do know is from the "*Saekbok* [dyed fabric clothes]' clothes]" chapter of the "Miscellaneous" section of *Samguk sagi* along with brief mentions on related topics found in official Chinese dynastic history books. The dearth of documentary sources, therefore, makes it necessary to consider archaeological evidence for further insight into this subject. However, items of clothing have not been discovered in a sufficiently intact condition, even at a well-preserved archaeological site. Most related finds have been limited to jewelry and accessories.

Direct documentary evidence related to clothes is likewise lacking for Saro-guk. However, there are some general descriptions of the way people dressed in the Proto-Three Kingdoms (Samhan), which includes Saro-guk, in the "Eastern Barbarians" section of *Sanguozhi*:

① They have a cultural fondness for clothing and hats. Those of lowly station borrow clothes and hats when they have to travel to the Lelang Commandery to meet the governor. A thousand of them voluntarily don formal attire along with an official seal string (Account of Han).

② They treasure beads as though they were gemstones and like to sew them to their clothes or wear them around the neck or as earrings. Gold and silver, and embroidered silk, on the other hand, are not considered valuable or precious (Account of Han).

③ These people….do not wear hats, leaving exposed their top hair knot, which shines like a weapon. They wear a coat made of hemp, and leather or straw shoes (Account of Han).

④ They are skilled silk farmers who weave silk fabrics (Account of Byeonjin).

⑤ They also produce finely woven hemp fabrics having a great width (Account of Byeonjin).

The first and second records provide information about clothes worn by people of the upper social strata. Given that some seventy-eight polities existed within the Proto-Three Kingdoms, if a thousand people from this overall area donned Chinese-style clothes and hats, and carried a seal string, this is roughly equivalent to ten people per polity. These people are therefore likely to have been members of the ruling class of each of the polities making up the Proto-Three Kingdoms. Meanwhile, those who were at the bottom rung of these societies borrowed formal Chinese-style clothes

and hats on occasions such as visits to the Han Commanderies. As for the information in 2, archaeological evidence corroborates the record.

The third record describes the appearance of ordinary members of this society. One can assume that only people of the ruling class wore leather shoes, while others wore straw shoes.

The fourth and fifth records regard the weaving industry in Byeonhan. People in Byeonhan are said to have reared silkworms, woven silk fabrics, and produced finely woven hemp fabrics of great width. When exactly sericulture was brought to the Samhan area from China, and where it originated, remains unclear.

Regardless, silk must have been produced in Samhan for trade purposes or as a luxury item exclusively reserved for use by members of the ruling class. However, if people of Samhan possessed weaving skills that were advanced enough to produce silk, there was probably a sufficient supply of fabrics to meet the clothing need of the entire population, even though the types of fabric that could be afforded varied according to wealth and social status.

## Clothing-related Archaeological Finds

Clothing-related items discovered in Saro-guk-period tombs include glass bead or jade necklaces, bronze bangles, belt loop-like animal-shaped bronze accessories and ornate bronze buttons. In Maripgan-period tombs, textile fragments have been occasionally found stuck to the surface of metal accessories. Such cases, however, are rare for this period.

As is mentioned in written records, glass bead necklaces appear to have been the basic and most popularly worn jewelry items. The glass beads are believed to have been made from raw materials that were brought from China or Southeast Asia. Some glass beads such as gilt glass beads, meanwhile, were imported in finished form. Glass bead necklaces are found most often in large-size tombs. The one discovered in the wooden coffin tomb of Hwangseong-dong (Tomb No. 2), an example of an early-period glass bead necklace, is made with beads of various different colors. Later glass bead necklaces such as the one from the wooden chamber tomb of Hadae, Ulsan (Tomb No. 44) contain crystal ornaments. At least until this period, gold jewelry and accessories for which Silla is famously known are entirely absent.






Fig 13 Jewelry and accessories of Jinhan and similar items from elsewhere

The use of bracelets goes back as far as that of rings or earrings. Since bracelets are less prominently on display than a crown or a necklace worn on the head or around the neck, it was not uncommon to wear several of them at the same time to amplify their ornamental effect. Four bronze bangle bracelets were discovered inside the wooden coffin tomb of Tap-dong, Gyeongju, two in Hwaseong-dong wooden coffin tomb No. 15 (575, Hwangseong-dong) and twelve in Sara-ri tomb No. 130. All of them are cast bronze items; some are round in cross-section while others are flat bangles. One of the four bracelets from the Tap-dong tomb has eight raised knobs <Fig 13-③>. Others from Sara-ri and Sindae-ri, Gyeongsan bear carved linear designs on the surface. It is, however, unclear whether these bracelets were locally produced or imported.

Animal-shaped bronze figures were belt ornaments, equipped with a hook for attachment. In China, metal belt ornaments of this kind were popular since the Spring and Autumn period, and they depict a wide variety of animals. This tradition continued through to the Warring States period and the Han Dynasty, and was also brought to Manchuria and the Korean peninsula along with other cultural forms and practices of the Central Plain. Animal-shaped belt ornaments also appeared from early on in the central and southern Korean peninsula where Jinhan and Byeonhan were based.

The earliest examples are belt ornaments that depict tigers that were discovered in the wooden coffin tomb of Tap-dong, Gyeongju <Fig 14-①>, Sara-ri tomb No. 130, and Deokcheon-ri tomb No. 127. Similar items have been also found inside wooden coffin tombs of Sindae-ri (Tomb No. 1 and east tomb No. 94). These items bear great resemblance to those discovered in the Liulige tomb in Huixian, Henan (Tomb No. 152) and the wooden chamber tomb in Majang-ri, Junghwa-gun, Pyeongyang, suggesting the likelihood that they were imported non-local goods. Tiger-shaped belt ornaments are either found together with horse-shaped examples or as single finds. In tombs dating from the third century, horse-shaped belt ornaments come to account for the bulk of items of this type. Otherwise, a belt ornament in the shaped of a bent rod, the kind popularly produced in China between the Warring States period and Han Dynasty, was discovered in Sindae-ri tomb No. 55 in Gyeongsan. This type of belt ornaments have been found in many Lelang Commandery tombs, including Namjeong-ri tomb No. 116 (Chaehyeopchong) in Pyeongyang.






Fig 14 Bronze buttons discovered in the wooden coffin tomb of Tap-dong, Gyeongju (① to ④) and at the Eoeun-dong archaeological site in Yeongcheon (⑤ to ⑥)

In 1918, a landslide in Eoeun-dong, Yeongcheon, following an avalanche led to an unexpected discovery of a large number of bronze artifacts. Han-dynasty bronze mirrors and reproductions thereof, bronze belt ornaments, and buttons <Figs 14-⑤ to 14-⑥> were among the items exposed by the collapse. Until then, the prevailing view among Korean historians was that bronze buttons were northern Bronze Age artifacts that flowed in from places such as Siberia or Manchuria. However, bronze buttons of this type have seldom, if ever, been discovered in areas north of the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, the linear designs on the surface of these buttons are quite similar to those of items from the Korean Bronze Dagger culture or bronze bracelets from the Proto-Three Kingdoms period. Hence, the possibility that these bronze buttons were locally produced in the Yeongnam region cannot be ruled out entirely. As for the frog-shaped buttons unearthed at the Eoeun-dong archaeological site and inside the Tap-dong wooden coffin tomb, similar examples have been discovered in Liaoning, China. However, they differ considerably in size. Meanwhile, items resembling the tiger and bear-shaped ornaments from the Tap-dong wooden coffin tomb have been found in China at archaeological sites that range chronologically from the Spring and Autumn period to the Western Han period.

# 4 General Artifacts

Artifacts from the Saro-guk period, brought to light through archaeological research, are mainly ceramic items and iron objects. Most of these items were found inside tombs. Aside from pottery and iron objects, bronzes and some lacquerware items have also survived from this period. Lacquerware items, however, are found in a condition that is too poor to yield any meaningful insights. Here, we shall simply note that quite a few cylindrically shaped lacquerware dishes with round lids and four legs have been found inside the Tap-dong wooden coffin tomb along with the lacquerware handle of a hand-held fan. As for bronze items, they were discussed in the above section on clothing, given that they are mostly jewelry or accessories

## Pottery

In 1977, a new type of ceramic ware that was not previously known was discovered accidentally at an archaeological site in Joyang-dong, Gyeongju. The excavation of this tomb site continued into the early 1980s and resulted in the identification of an entirely new group of pottery unknown to the world until then. This group of pottery was designated as 'soft pottery' in reference to the easily scratchable surface. It is similar in this respect to clay roof tiles, and is the main type of pottery produced in Saro-guk, up until the mid-third century.

This pottery, although deriving from the mumun pottery of the early Iron Age in terms of the basic production method, shows the influence of Han-dynasty pottery, which continued the tradition begun in the Warring States period. Soft vessels were made using a potter's wheel with a rotating disc. Unlike pottery of the preceding generations that were fired in an oxidized atmosphere and were reddish-brown in hue as a result, the new ceramic ware was fired in a reduced atmosphere. Fired in a semi-closed kiln, creating an atmosphere with a reduced amount of oxygen, at a temperature of 1,000° Celsius or lower, they have a distinct light grey to greyish yellow hue. Soft pottery was produced across the two different periods of Saro-guk according to differing burial architecture: wooden coffin and wooden chamber tomb periods. Starting in the mid-third century when separate grave good chambers first appeared in wooden chamber tombs, soft pottery was fired at a higher temperature (above 1,000° Celsius), gradually acquiring the hardness of ceramic pottery. These harder variants of soft pottery remained in use up until the mid-fourth century, when a full-fledged type of Silla pottery emerged during the Maripgan period. To distinguish them from Silla pottery, they are referred to as Old-style Stoneware.

Compared to Old-style Stoneware pottery and Silla pottery, soft pottery was not only more easily scratched or dented, but was also simpler and more rudimentary in design. Another important characteristic is that the clay used for soft pottery was much purer than that for pottery with clay appliqué rims <Fig 15> - circular or triangular in mouth shape. Some soft vessels from this period have stamped designs on the surface. Soft pottery is generally discussed in reference to two main periods, an early and late period, or as ancient and new soft pottery. Ancient soft pottery first appeared sometime in the early first century BC, which is about one hundred years after the emergence of Saro-guk. Two main variants that have been identified thus far are the long-necked jar with two oxhorn-shaped handles <Fig 16> and the so-called pouch jar <Fig 17>. Less common types also exist, such as short-necked jars with stamped designs, short-necked jars with everted rims, and small dishes. Ancient soft pottery has been found in most wooden coffin tombs, including the Joyang-dong site in Gyeongju.

The array of jars and dishes later became diversified with the introduction of new soft pottery. Goblets <Fig 18>, large-mouthed footed jars <Fig 19>, straight-mouthed footed jars <Fig 20>, short-necked jars with stamped

Fig 15 Pottery from the early Iron Age

Fig 16 Long-necked jar with oxhorn-shaped handles, Burial No. 38, Joyang-dong, Gyeongju

Fig 17 Pouch jar, Burial No. 38, Joyang-dong, Gyeongju





Fig 18 Pedestal dishes (upper: Burial No. 3, Joyang-dong, Gyeongju; lower: Burial No. 14, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju)

Fig 19 Long-necked Pedestal Jar with everted rim (Wooden chamber No. 19, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju)

Fig 20 Pedestal Jar with upright rim (Wooden chamber No. 16, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju)

Fig 21 Hot-pot-shaped pottery (Wooden chamber No. 120, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju)

(latticework) designs, large-mouthed small jars, and brazier- shaped pottery are some of the examples of newly-introduced vessels. The most salient characteristic of later-period soft pottery vessels is that most of them are mounted on a foot. The increase in the variety of items also unquestionably influenced the style of Old-style Stoneware pottery that succeeded new soft pottery. New soft pottery was produced chiefly between the mid-second century and the mid-third century, which corresponds to the period of transition from wooden coffin tombs to wooden chamber tombs in Saro-guk.

New soft pottery was fired at a higher temperature than the previous kind, and the surface was finished using a stamping tool. Most of them were mounted on a foot, and some of them decorated with openwork designs. Lidded jars also appeared during this period when pottery became more elaborate overall. Notwithstanding, these pottery ware were still fired at a temperature of 900° Celsius or lower, which resulted in a high rate of absorption, making them unsuitable for practical use. Vessels such as footed jars with a wide mouth, brazier-shaped dishes, and so-called Sinseollo-shaped(hot-pot-shaped) potteries, which are a variant of the latter <Fig 21>, are extremely elaborate objects. These items are thought to have been some sort of prestige items and are found only in tombs. Another notable fact is that there is a high concentration of duck-shaped pottery <Fig 22-Fig 23> in areas formerly controlled by Jinhan. Although commonly designated as a duck, the bird represented has a head topped by a comb on top of the body of a duck. The bird could be a duck-like species that once existed and then became extinct. Some of them even have a head resembling that of an owl <Fig 24>.

Thus, there were many changes and improvements that were introduced between the early and late periods that are characterized by the use of soft pottery. Concretely, they created perfectly symmetrical objects with the walls maintained to an even thickness using a potter's wheel. In other words, a certain level of standardization was achieved in pottery production by this time. Moreover, potters used stamping tools to create latticework or rope patterns on the front of vessels. Stamping helped prevent the surface from splitting or cracking while making vessels look more attractive. Potter were progressively fired at a higher temperature as well. These advances in pottery production techniques must have certainly laid the foundation for the production of Old-style Stoneware pottery in the subsequent era.

Old-style Stoneware pottery that derived from later-period soft pottery was used for approximately a century until pottery-making in the area branched





Fig 22 Duck-shaped pottery (Wooden chamber No. 80, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju)

Fig 23 Duck-shaped pottery (Wooden chamber No. 120, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju)

Fig 24 Owl-shaped pottery (Wooden chamber No. 20, House No. 575 at Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju)

Fig 25 Early Old-style Stoneware short neck Jar (Wooden chamber No. 1, Gueo-ri, Gyeongju)

into two different traditions, namely the Silla and Gaya traditions. The transition toward ceramic-grade pottery is best described as a technological leap rather than an extension of the soft pottery tradition, as it involved firing pottery at high temperatures exceeding 1,000° Celsius. The kilns used for their production were likely completely closed. It is also probable that the transition from soft pottery to this new type of pottery was a slow and progressive process, and that there was a long trial-and-error period before potters acquired the necessary production technique. The fact that for a time, ceramic-grade pottery in the form of short-necked jars were found in wooden chamber tombs together with soft pottery supports this hypothesis. Short-necked jars of this transition period are often misshapen or have flaws such as air bubbles trapped in the surface, indicating that the state of technology was less than perfect. Short-necked jars were then followed by brazier-shaped vessels. The existence of an experimental period strongly suggests that this technology was not of an exogenous origin and that it was gradually developed out of a native pottery-making tradition. Meanwhile, as the production of ceramic pottery is a much more time-consuming process than soft pottery, their production must have become specialized work carried out by full-time artisans following this transition.

## Iron Artifacts

The Saro-guk period in archaeological periodization corresponds to the so-called Proto-Three Kingdoms period, the defining characteristic of which is the widespread use of iron tools. Not coincidentally, tombs in Gyeongju where Saro-guk was established are the greatest treasure troves of iron artifacts. For example, some seventy flat iron axes were discovered in Sara-ri tomb No. 130 <Fig 26>. Iron appears to have played a crucial role both in the birth and growth of Saro-guk.

Recent archaeological discoveries indicate that by the second century BC, corresponding to the end of the early Iron Age, bronze tools had been already replaced by iron tools to a certain extent. In other words, the Iron Age came to the Yeongnam region much earlier than previously thought. Representative iron artifacts from this period range from cast iron axe heads with a rectangular eye to forged daggers and tools. By the first century BC, as evidenced by iron artifacts from Joyang-dong tomb No.





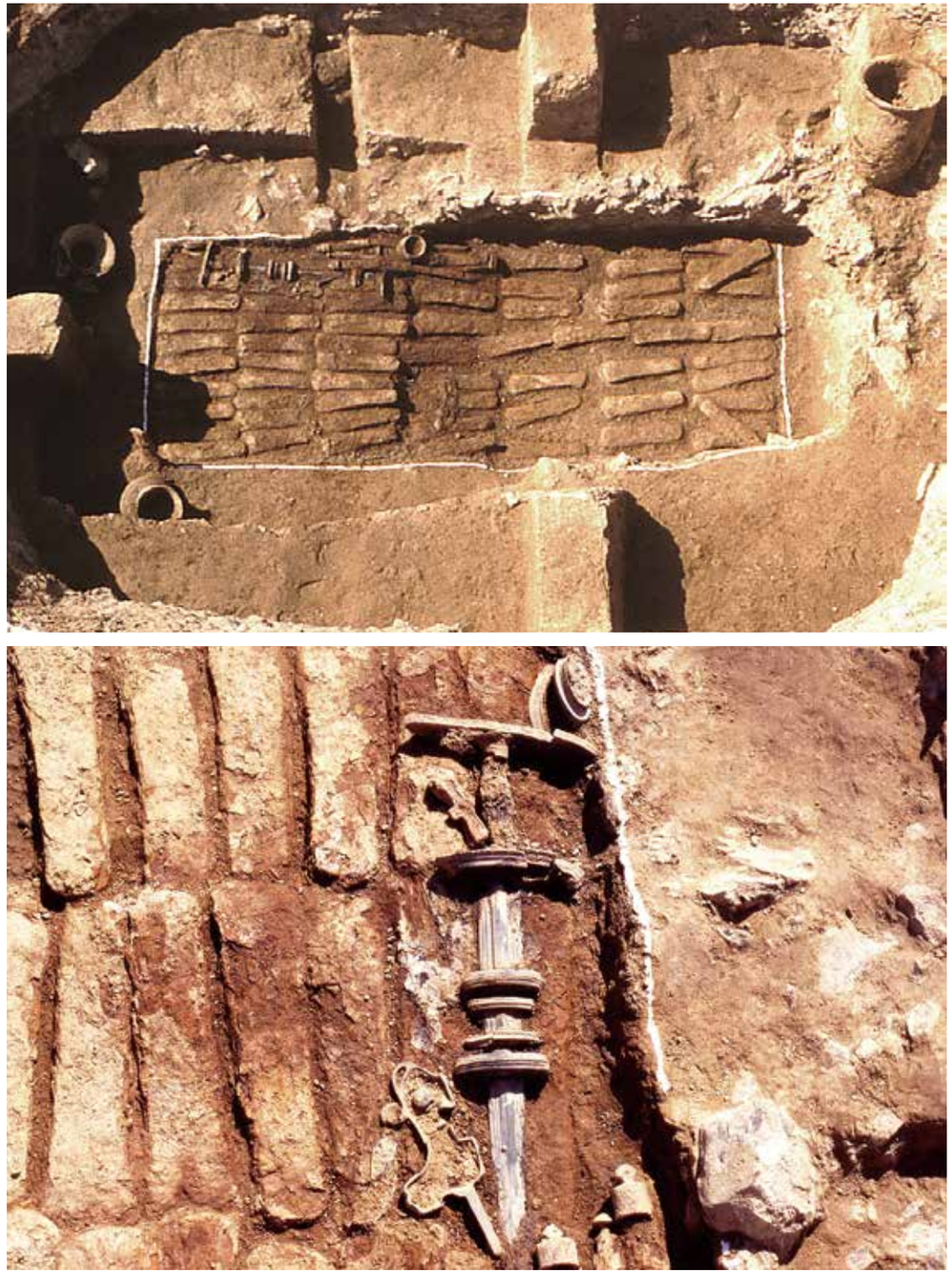


Fig 26 Burial No. 130, Sara-ri, Gyeongju (upper); Detail (lower)

Fig 27 Flat Iron Axes (upper) and Cast iron axes from Gyeongju

5, iron tools, both cast and forged, took solid hold. Cast iron axe heads were eventually made so that the eye is shaped like a trapezoid in cross-section, a style distinctively associated with the Yeongnam region <Fig 27, bottom>. Cast iron axes, despite their name, appear to have been used as hoes. These items are considered as compelling physical evidence of the start of the production of iron tools in the area. Flat iron axes <Fig 27, top>,





Fig 28 Iron sickles (Upper: Burial No. 2, House No. 810, Changpyeong-dong, Ulsan; Lower: Burial No. 64, House No. 575, Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju)

another distinctive item from the Iron Age in the Yeongnam region, were also buried in massive quantities as grave goods around this time. Much more standardized than similar tools of earlier eras, they are likely to have been intermediate blank forms that were used to make other forged tools, although they could also have been used as axes by sharpening the blade. Otherwise, farming implements such as scythes <Fig 28> and forged axes of various sizes have also been found in tombs. Small knives with a round looped handle were probably used as a razor of some sort.

Among weapons, iron daggers <Fig 29-①~③> were the most basic type of weapon used since the early Iron Age. Iron spearheads <Fig 29-④~⑬> were also produced since that time. These weapons, both forged, replaced corresponding bronze weapons. Once into the Saro-guk period, iron arrowheads also appeared and were commonly buried as grave goods along with swords and spearheads. Iron daggers were the main blade weapons for a long time until the emergence of swords (daedo) in the late second century following the short-lived popularity of *janggeom*, an early type of sword in the mid-second century. The most widely used type of swords were those with a loop-shaped pommel, which are only found in wooden chamber tombs. The most common type of iron spearheads are those with a two-tiered collar that functioned as an extra collar around the socket where the shaft is inserted. Arrowheads were initially without a tang <Fig 30>, but became equipped with a tang later at the time when wooden chamber tombs replaced wooden coffin tombs. Tangless arrowheads were


Fig 29 Iron daggers (①-③) and iron spears (④-⑬) from Gyeongju





Fig 30 Tangless iron arrowheads (Burial No. 2, House No. 810, Changpyeong-dong, Ulsan)

short and wide at the early stage of production, but became progressively longer and narrower. However, arrowheads were equipped with a tang even in prehistoric times; this seeming regression of producing more rudimentary arrowheads without a tang may be explained by the ease and simplicity of production.

As was the case with the early Saro-guk period, the possession of iron weapons was likely reserved for the most powerful individuals, just as only the most powerful groups in Bronze Age societies had access to bronze weapons. This is clearly evinced by archaeological finds from Sara-ri tomb No. 130. Notably, large quantities of iron spearheads with a raised collar were found in tombs of this period, together with tangless arrowheads. This pattern, not confined to the Gyeongju area, suggests that the ruling groups of Jinhan and Byeonhan already started to shore up their political dominance with military might by expanding their arsenal of weapons at a rapid pace.

Meanwhile, in approximately the second century BC when wooden chambertombs first appeared, there were some significant changes in the iron weapons and tools. The swords with a looped pommels <Fig 31> mentioned above were discovered in large wooden chamber tombs, systematically accompanied by farming implements such as plows <Fig 34>, pitchforks <Fig 36>, and shovel blades <Fig 35>. The utilization of iron shovel blades and pitchforks must have resulted in an increase in agricultural productivity. Moreover, the fact that these farming implements are found only in large tombs indicates that these tools were exclusive possessions of the élite members of this society. Large tombs in which

Fig 31 Long sword with ring pommel (Wooden chamber No. 1, Gangbyeon-ro at Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju)

Fig 32 Decorative iron spears (Wooden chamber No. 1, Gueo-ri, Gyeongju)

Fig 33 Fern-shaped implement (Wooden chamber No. 1, Gueo-ri, Gyeongju)

Fig 34 Plows (left: Wooden chamber No. 19, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju; right: Wooden chamber No. 1, Gueo-ri, Gyeongju)

Fig 35 Shovel blade (Wooden chamber No. Na-101, Okseong-ri, Pohang)

Fig 36 Pitchforks (left: Wooden chamber No. Na-101, Okseong-ri, Pohang; right: Wooden chamber No. 64, House No. 575, Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju)





such grave goods are found also tend to contain crystal beads, pointing to the emergence of a ruling class whose dominance was both political and economic in nature.

Toward the mid-third century, a new burial custom appeared in the Gyeongju area. Long iron spearheads, decorated with an appliqué of an iron rod rolled into a fern-like shape, were laid in the bottom of wooden chamber tombs as if they were rail ties. The wooden chamber tomb of Deokcheon-ri is a good example of this phenomenon

This practice is characteristic to the tombs of Saro-guk's ruling class members. The elaborate surface design of the iron spearheads, meanwhile, is telling of the strides made in iron tool technology around this time. Armor suits that first appeared around this time and helmets that soon followed them also clearly attest to these trends. The armor was of the plate style, made by connecting vertically-long iron plates. The ironwork site in Hwangseong-dong, believed to have been in active operation around the third century, also provides ample evidence of strides made in iron technology in the form of traces of smelting, refining, and forging processes that took place there.

Asides from the tools and weapons discussed above, there are also horse bits and other riding equipment. Horse tack first appeared in tombs of the first century BC, around the time of the birth of Saro-guk. The most commonly found items are horse bits, which are sometimes accompanied

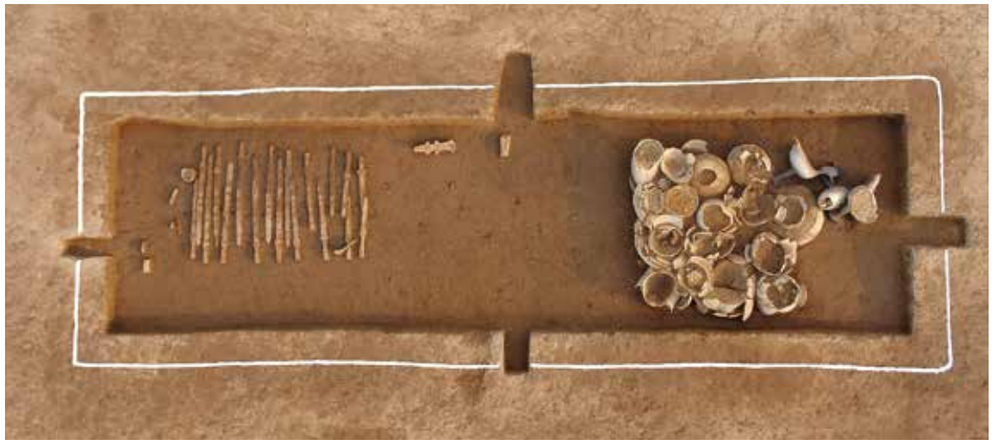


Fig 37 Wooden chamber No. 120, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju

Fig 38 Neck guard armour with accompanying plate armour





Fig 39 S-shaped cheek-piece, Burial No. 130, Sara-ri, Gyeongju

Fig 40 Fern-shaped horse bit, Wooden chamber No. 1, Gangbyeon-ro at Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju

by an attachment with two rings at either end for joining them to a bridle. A bit consists of a mouthpiece, which stimulates the horse's tongue and two cheekpieces that prevent the mouth piece from slipping off. Most bits dating from the first century BC have rod-type cheekpieces. Cheekpieces either shaped like propellers with two round vanes or a straight-lined rod with an

angular cross-section were attached at either end of a curbed bit, made by twisting an iron rod. While either end of a cheekpiece was flat, its middle section was thicker. The bridle was attached to these cheekpieces using the two holes on the sides.

From the first to the early second century, although the main types of riding gear produced remained mostly unchanged as in the preceding period, the relative number of rod-shaped cheekpieces increased. Also, cheekpieces that are S-shaped with tips curled up to form a fern-like design appeared for the first time in this period. Such cheekpieces have been discovered in Sara-ri tomb No. 130 <Fig 39>, and more recently in the wooden coffin tomb of Tap-dong. The fern design is not confined to cheekpieces, but is also found in weapons such as spearheads, as was stated above. This design is a distinctive feature of iron artifacts from the former Jinhan and Byeonhan areas, not encountered anywhere else on the Korean peninsula.

Between the mid-second century and the third century, there were some noticeable changes in the types and aspect of horse fittings, this transition coinciding with the emergence of wooden chamber tombs. The most remarkable of these changes is that bits now came in sizes as well as designs that were no longer adapted for practical use. In contrast to the previous period, the vast majority of bits are S-shaped, with various styles of fern design. Meanwhile, the bits that were once excessively thin grew to 30 cm and more in length, too long to be practically useful for controlling a horse. Moreover, the cheekpieces have only one hole on the front side. One hole is insufficient for attaching the bridle, and even if a bridle were successfully attached, these cheekpieces would not function properly. It can thus be conjectured that the bits from this period were made mostly, if not solely, as grave goods. The case in point is the bits discovered in the wooden chamber tomb of Hwangseong-dong (Gangbyeon-ro tomb No. 1) <Fig 40>.





# 5 Trade and Exchange

Artifacts from the Saro-guk period that are the most indicative of external trade activities are metal and glass items. Bronze mirrors are the single most representative type of metal artifacts from this period, while there are also some bronze jewelry and accessories that were discussed earlier in this book. Among glass items, beads may be considered informative of external exchange insofar as they were produced using raw materials that were imported from China and Southeast Asia. Gilt glass beads, meanwhile, are thought to have been brought from the Lelang Commandery or China's Central Plain by way of the Mahan region.

## Metal Artifacts

Bronze mirrors are among the easiest of artifacts of non-local origin from this period in terms of determining their origin. Not only have they survived in large quantities, but the bulk of them are Han-dynasty mirrors. The Western-Han mirrors discovered in 1982 in the Joyang-dong tomb No. 38 are well-known examples. Four of them were of Chinese origin, while one was a reproduction. All five are carved with inscriptions in variant Chinese characters that read "*gasanggwibugyeong* (家常貴富鏡)," "*somyeonggyeong* (昭明鏡)," or "*ilgwanggyeong* (日光鏡)." These mirrors, being a set of several

Western Han mirrors, received special attention at the time of their discovery. Currently, the consensus is that this tomb was built as early as the late first century BC.

Several decades later, in 2010, a wooden coffin tomb was discovered in Tap-dong, an area lying close to the south of Wolseong. It was estimated to date to the late first century AD, about one hundred years later than Joyang-dong tomb No. 38. This tomb yielded a large array of grave goods that included daggers with a slender blade (sehyeongdonggeom), tiger-shaped


Fig 41 Han mirrors from Burial No. 38 at Joyang-dong, Gyeongju (① to ②); Wooden coffin No. 75 at Sindae-ri, Gyeongsan (③); and Jar burial No. 13 at Seonggok-ri, Pohang (④)





belt ornaments, bronze buttons representing various animals, bronze bangle bracelets, iron horse bits, iron swords, arrowheads, spearheads and iron cauldrons, in addition to soft pottery vessels <Fig 41>. The Tap-dong tomb, a grave in a central location in the Gyeongju basin, is considered of great significance for the artifacts of non-local origin that it contains.

The grave goods from this tomb included two bronze mirrors. One of them is a typical *riguangjing* or "sunlight mirror", while the other is a reproduction having a surface design consisting of a character placed multiple times in a manner to form a concentric pattern. Four reproductions of Han-dynasty mirrors have also been discovered in Sara-ri tomb No. 130, which dates from approximately the same period as the Tap-dong wooden coffin tomb.

It is unquestionable that Han-style mirrors found in this area were made in China's Central Plain. They reached the Yeongnam region by way of the Lelang and other Han Commanderies in the northwestern Korean peninsula. By the same token, these mirrors are important pieces of evidence to the existence of trade and exchange between Lelang and Jinhan and Byeonhan.

Fig 42 Non-local and imitation artifacts excavated from the wooden coffin burial at Tapdong, Gyeongju

In Gyeongju where Saro-guk was based, only those mirrors that were made sometime after the establishment of the Lelang Commandery have been found. On the other hand, bronze mirrors that date from an earlier period such as mirrors with nebular designs of Chinese origin or their locally-made reproductions have been discovered in other places near Gyeongju such as Pohang, Yeongcheon, and Gyeongsan. Therefore, trade and exchange appear to have existed between the Yeongnam region and the northwestern Korean peninsula since early times. According to some, the copies of Han- dynasty mirrors would have been made in the Japanese Archipelago. However, there is an equally strong possibility that they were produced in Jinhan or Byeonhan.

## Jewelry and Accessories

Bronze bracelets and animal-shaped belt ornaments are the main types of jewelry and accessories discovered in the former territory of Saro-guk. Wearing semi-precious metal jewelry or accessories was a custom that first appeared in this period. It is, therefore, reasonable to surmise that some of the early jewelry and accessories were of non-local origin. However, what portion of them were actually imported cannot be determined with any degree of certainty.

One of the four bronze bracelets that were found inside the Tap-dong wooden coffin tomb has eight conically shaped knobs distributed around the outer rim. Three of them appear to be bracelets that were intended to be actually worn by a person. Meanwhile, in Sara-ri tomb No. 130, six pairs of bracelets were found on either side of the body of the dead at a location corresponding to the wrists. Six of the twelve bracelets had surface patterns that were either lozenge-shaped or consisted of diagonal lines. Considering that similar bronze bracelets have been discovered in Lelang archaeological sites, some of these bracelets could be of non-local origin.

Belt ornaments depicting animals are also items that first appeared in this period. Tiger-shaped belt ornaments from the Tap-dong wooden coffin tomb, Sara-ri tomb No. 130 and Deokcheon-ri tomb No. 127, are among the earliest examples. Similar items were found inside in Liulige tomb No. 152 in Huixian in Henan, China, and the wooden coffin tomb of Majang-ri, Junghwa-gun, Pyeongyang. This again suggests that these early belt ornaments were made elsewhere.

Bronze buttons are commonly found at Bronze Age sites of Northern Asia. These buttons most often have a cast design depicting various animals. All buttons discovered inside the Tap-dong wooden coffin tomb are made of bronze. The animals depicted range from tigers to bears and frogs. Some are round in shape, and some are square with a tortoise-like design. Frog-shaped buttons have been traced back to the Northern Asian Bronze Age. As for tiger and bear-shaped buttons, earlier examples of their kinds have not been found anywhere within the Korean peninsula. They are reminiscent of bronze buttons from Chinese archaeological sites of the late Warring States period to the Han Dynasty. Furthermore, these buttons are cast in a type of bronze that is visibly different, even to the naked eye, from that which is commonly used in items from the Saro-guk period.

Metal dishes found at archaeological sites of the Saro-guk to Maripgan periods, although many of them are modeled on ritual vessels of China's Central Plain, also include traditional everyday utensils of nomadic peoples such as bronze cauldrons. In Gyeongju, iron cauldrons have been discovered inside the Tap-dong wooden coffin tomb and in Sara-ri tomb No. 130. Although severely damaged with only a portion of the wall and the bottom still remaining, the cauldron from the Tap-dong tomb nevertheless appears quite similar in shape to the one from Sara-ri. Currently, insufficient evidence is available to be able to determine their place of production. However, their general appearance suggests that they could have been modeled on bronze cauldrons, which would point to the possibility of a non-local origin.

## Glass and Jade Artifacts

By the time the Saro-guk polity formed, glass was more widely used in the southeastern Korean peninsula, with more varied types of products made of glass. The component analysis of glass manufactured in this period revealed that they were still based on lead or barium, as they were in the early Iron Age. However, potash glass eventually emerged followed by soda glass. Raw materials for the production of glass appear to have been imported from China or Southeast Asian countries. A necklace made with indigo-

Fig 43 Crystal comma-shaped and multifaceted ornaments excavated from wooden chamber No. 19, Deokcheon-ri, Gyeongju

colored glass beads and crystal gems was found in Sara-ri tomb No. 130. Meanwhile, colorful necklaces made with beads of various different tones have been discovered in tombs of the Deokcheon-ri tumulus group and the Okseong-ri tumulus group in Pohang.

Among beads from this period, a type of gilt glass beads known as 'stratified beads' deserve particular attention. Items with this special type of beads have been discovered in two third-century wooden chamber tombs at Deokcheon-ri: one item in tomb No. 15 and four items (six beads) in tombNo. 24. Aside from these tombs, Yangdong-ri tomb No. 462 in Gimhae is the only other





tomb in the Jinhan/ Byeonhan area in which stratified beads have been found. In contrast, in the former territory of Mahan, lying further to the west, as many as one hundred twenty-three such beads have been harvested from nineteen different tombs. This points to the possibility that the stratified beads from Deokcheon-ri were imported there by way of Mahan.

The fondness the prehistoric and ancient peoples of the Korean peninsula held for jade and gemstones goes back to deep antiquity. During the Bronze Age, amazonite was the most representative gemstone. During the Proto-Three Kingdoms period, crystal, agate, and jadeite were popular. Jadeite was the most representative gemstone during the Three Kingdoms period. The possession of jade and gemstones, highly valued in ancient societies of that time, was most likely to have been reserved for the upper echelon of society.

In tombs in the former territory of Saro-guk such as two wooden chamber tombs at Deokcheon-ri (No. 18 and No. 19) and a tomb in Joyang-dong (No. 3), comma-shaped or multifaceted crystals of the highest quality have been discovered. Crystal ornaments became the dominant type of jewelry in the Yeongnam region as a whole around the time of transition to wooden chamber tombs. However, as attested to by the example of Sara-ri tomb No. 130 in the Gyeongju area, crystal jewelry was already in use prior to this transition to wooden chamber tombs. This is another measure of the extent to which Saro-guk was more advanced than other polities in the area. No definite answer is available for the time being as to the question of where crystal could have been mined at that time. Meanwhile, some researchers contend that these crystal items are imported goods from the northwestern Korean peninsula. Agate was another gemstone for which people of this period held a fondness. Ornaments made using agate have been discovered in a wooden chamber tomb at Deokcheon-ri (No. 36). These items could also have been imported, but it is equally possible that they were produced locally using imported agate.

Chapter 2

# Blossoming of a Golden Culture

## The Maripgan Period

Cities and Fortresses
Tombs and Burial Customs
Clothing and Jewelry
General Artifacts
Trade and Exchange





In the late third century to the early fourth century, small and independent polities that existed across the eastern valley of the Nakdonggang River and beyond since approximately the beginning of the first century BC were subjugated and absorbed by Saro-guk. The establishment of this larger polity inaugurated a new era in Silla's history, known as the Maripgan period. The Gyeongju area was now the royal capital, and other areas that were previously small polities became the various provinces of Silla.

Judging from early records in *Samguk sagi*, related to the subjugation of small polities, and the pattern of distribution of Silla-style grave goods in tombs built during the Maripgan period, Silla's territory appears to have extended to the eastern basin of the Nakdonggang River, with places such as Busan, Yangsan, Miryang, Changnyeong, Daegu and Seongju, and inland areas of Gyeongbuk brought under its control. Yeongdeok and Uljin in the coastal region and Samcheok, Gangneung and Yangyang further along the East Coast also became part of Silla's sphere. Meanwhile, the appearance of Silla-style pottery in tombs located near Samnyeonsanseong Fortress in Boeun, Chungbuk, starting from the fifth century, suggests that its reign reached beyond the Sobaek Range to the Chungbuk region.

The way Silla ruled over its provinces during the period from 350 to the early sixth century is commonly referred to as 'indirect rule.' Local provinces were governed by their existing chiefs, rather than by officials sent from the capital, who levied tributes on behalf of the central government. Although the provinces had nominal sovereignty, the central government was not yet powerful enough to directly control them. They were, therefore, forced to govern by making appropriate use of existing local power structures. Various mechanisms were naturally put into place to ensure the continued loyalty of the provinces to the central government. For example, in order to prevent its provinces from forming coalitions amongst each other or cementing ties with external groups, military officials were dispatched to conduct surveillance over them.

During the Maripgan period, produce and goods were sent to the royal capital from the provinces as tribute. Meanwhile, the possibility to mobilize manpower from its provinces permitted the construction of Wolseong, the capital city. In mountainous areas around Wolseong, a fortress was built for defensive purposes as well as to shelter civilians in wartime. The gigantic tombs found in various places inside the capital city, belonging to deceased maripgan and chiefs of the six political divisions—known as six bu—must

have been also built through materials and manpower brought from the provinces. Wolseong remained the seat of the royal government until the fall of Silla six centuries later. This is indicative of how most of the basic foundation of Silla was already laid during the Maripgan period.

In the provinces, attempts must have been made by officials vested with authority by the central government such as *gan* and other members of the ruling elite to consolidate their power base by increasing their demand on local populations for contributions in terms of physical and manpower resources. Gigantic tombs, created as their postmortem dwellings, are a testament to the contradictory nature of power relationships in this period of indirect rule. Members of the local ruling elite had their position strengthened within their own power base, but were nevertheless subservient to Silla as evinced by the grave goods found in their tombs. Various clothing and pottery items buried with local chiefs all followed a homogenous Silla style.

Artifacts surviving to the present that offer glimpses into the lifestyle of the Maripgan period are mostly grave goods. The array of grave goods thus far identified is vast, comprising nearly all conceivable everyday items. They range from pottery, metal jewelry, and accessories to weapons, armor, horse fittings, farming implements, tools, metal dishes, jade items, lacquerware, textiles, paintings, and miscellaneous exotic goods. Given their massive quantities, grave goods must have claimed a hefty share of the economy at that time and entailed logistical operations at a considerable scale.

The pottery from this period shows a predilection for straight-lined silhouettes rather than curvaceous or flared shapes. Distinctive Silla-style pottery such as those with clay figurines in appliqué or the carved design of a horse also appeared during this period. In Silla, often referred to as the "Golden Kingdom," gold and silver jewelry in addition to accessories were important status symbols for members of its ruling class. Jewelry items are routinely found in all Silla tombs. Even in those tombs that are relatively scantily furnished with grave goods, at least a pair of earrings has been discovered. Silla tombs regularly and repeatedly yield items such as gold or gilt-bronze crowns with distinct trident-like vertical projections, gold earrings of various designs, glass-bead neck and chest ornaments, gold and silver belts, and swords. Gold and silver dishes, Goguryeo-style bronze dishes, glassware of Eastern Roman or Persian origin, and jewelry items with bean-shaped jadeite pendants are also characteristically associated with Silla. As



famously exemplified by the *Cheonmado* (painting of a flying horse) of Cheonmachong, paintings realized on white birch bark are also unique to Silla and were never encountered in other states during the Three Kingdoms period. Meanwhile, the highly-original, bejeweled dagger in Central Asian style which probably arrived in Silla through the Silk Road by way of Goguryeo bears witness to the importance of trade for this kingdom situated in the far southeast corner of the Korean peninsula. As a matter of fact, Silla was mostly deprived of access to trade routes, hence also of access to exotic and non-local goods.

# 1 Cities and Fortresses

## The Creation of the Royal Capital and a Defense System

The distribution of features and artifacts dating from the late third century onward, and written records provide some general ideas as to how the royal capital of the Maripgan period was organized in terms of urban planning and types of defense structures.

Based on available research, it appears that at some time in the fourth century, the area corresponding to the current city of Gyeongju in the middle of the Gyeongju Basin was divided into three main sections: the royal palace district, a tumulus cluster, and a production zone. Archaeological findings confirm that Wolseong and its vicinity accommodated houses of members of the Silla elite and at the same time served as the administrative zone. The tombs of the ruling class, meanwhile, were concentrated in Hwangnam-dong and Hwango-dong. Workshops were found chiefly in Hwangseong-dong and its environs, along with the village and burial site of iron production specialists. In the level land area, and on the immediate outskirts of this zone, the remains of kilns for production of pottery for everyday use were also identified. If we suppose that these three zones were allotted in such a manner to facilitate communication, the main residential zone could have extended 3.5-4.0 km on the longest side. Although more evidence is needed in order to declare this area as a city, by





Fig 1 Bird's eye view of Wolseong and its environs, Gyeongju

Fig 2 Myeonghwalsanseong Fortress exposed through excavation, Gyeongju

the late fourth century it appears to have assumed the role as the center of Silla, a polity with an ever wider-reaching territory.

Wolseong, where the royal palace was located, is situated in the middle of the Gyeongju basin. Presumed to have been completed no later than the fourth century, Wolseong served both as the residential district for the Silla royal house and as the seat of the government until the ultimate fall of the kingdom centuries later. Although given the dearth of archaeological knowledge concerning Wolseong, it is premature to make any definitive statements on the topic, information gathered from written records, the tumulus cluster nearby, and other building remains quite clearly suggests that this is the case.

The Wolseong area was a general residential zone up until the third century and then a special district removed from the residential neighborhood by some distance developed. Toward the late fifth century, the Wolseong area was redeveloped as attested to by both written records and archaeological evidence. One finds in *Samguk sagi* that in the main section on Silla there are passages that mention that buildings in Wolseong were reconstructed or repaired in the ninth year of the reign of Maripgan Soji (485). This reconstruction work must be looked at in connection with the repair of Myeonghwalsanseong Fortress.

Toward the late fifth century, Silla experienced an increased military threat from Goguryeo. To prepare for an eventual enemy attack, the six bu of Silla's government were appropriately overhauled, and Myeonghwalsanseong Fortress was also repaired at this time to give it a more adequate capability for defending the royal capital. Major work done to Myeonghwalsanseong Fortress, mentioned in ancient records, may possibly refer to the rebuilding of the original earthen fortress with stones. Myeonghwalseong Fortress, located east of Gyeongju, is a mountain fortress of great proportions. Its position in the passage from Gyeongju to eastern coastal areas by way of the Churyeong Pass of Tohamsan Mountain made it a strategic defense point against attacks from the Japanese archipelago. The reason that the fortress was repaired at this precise juncture was that they wanted to use this stronghold as a shelter in case of an invasion by Goguryeo, in addition to thwarting attacks from the Japanese archipelago. In fact, in 475, upon hearing the news that Baekje's capital, Hanseong, fell to the enemy, Silla's king immediately moved to Myeonghwalsanseong Fortress. The king ruled the country from Myeonghwal Fortress for more than ten years, returning to Wolseong only in 488 when all repairs had been completed there.

The defense zone immediately surrounding Wolseong is made up of several mountain fortresses: Myeolhwalsanseong in the east, Namsansanseong in the south, and Seohyeongsanseong in the west. This zone was enveloped by an outer defense ring, consisting of Bukhyeonsanseong Fortress in the north, Gwanmunsanseong Fortress in the southeast, and Busanseong Fortress in the west. However, current evidence indicates that this defense line was not formed until the Middle period. Nevertheless, considering that potsherds dating from the Maripgan period have been collected amid the ruins of fortresses that are recorded to have been built in the Middle Ancient or the Middle period, it is highly likely that some sort of defense structures, probably of earthen or similar construction, existed there even prior to that point in time. This is all the more so given how these places are key defense points for Silla's capital city. What is likely to have happened is either that defense structures were progressively built starting in Wolseong, then in places in the immediate surrounding area and in those forming the outer ring. Alternatively, earthen fortifications that already existed independently were later organized into a comprehensive defense system at some point when they were rebuilt with stone fortifications

## Development of a Territorial Defense System

At the same time as the building of a capital city occurred that was befitting of the growing power and prestige of its monarch, Silla strove to strengthen the control of the provinces within its territory. During the Maripgan period, construction of fortresses was the most effective way to achieve it. Following the construction of Samnyeonsanseong Fortress in 470, a series of other such defense structures were built across the country. The name "Samnyeon," literally meaning three years, was given to this fortress after the fact that it took three years to build. Construction projects enlisting workforces for such extended periods of time are no small enterprise. This goes to show how prominent the issue of defense was for Silla, as it faced the possibility of an attack from Goguryeo. According to *Samguk sagi*, Moro Fortress was completed in 471, and a series of other fortresses in places such as Ilmo

Fig 3 View of a wall of Samnyeon Mountain Fortress in Boeun

and Sasi were completed in 474. Although the precise locations of these fortresses are currently unknown, the guess is that they must have been at strategic nodal points in Silla's transportation networks.

In the absence of direct records about how and what size of manpower was mobilized for such projects, we can gain an indirect insight from *Samguk sagi*, specifically from the article on the construction of a fortress in Niha in 468. Judging from this article, those who were mobilized as construction workers were generally people aged fifteen or older. It is also probable that, as the need for manpower increased in time, a survey of populations was carried out to determine available workforces by age and gender. Furthermore, to manage this process, necessary organizational structures must have been put into place in provinces as well. The process must have been overseen by the *chongan* as they were the chiefs of provinces. However, low-level organizations that were practically responsible for related tasks must have also been created. Currently, fortress remains in the Yeongnam region with the likelihood of having





Fig 4 Scene of excavation of Gomosanseong Fortress in Mungyeong

been constructed during this period are found mostly in the mid- to lower reaches of the Nakdonggang River, northern Gyeongbuk, Chungbuk, and eastern coastal areas. Several strategically important points on the route toward Gyeongju are situated strategically the mid- to lower Nakdonggang River valley. Fortresses located near where the Nakdonggang and Geumhogang Rivers meet, and those along the route toward Daegu, and then to Gyeongsan and Yeongcheon were possibly linked together to form a single defense line. A large number of fortress remains are found also along the route linking Yangsan with Yeonyang and Ulsan. These might also have formed a common defense line together.

Fig 5 Distant view of an earthen fortress built on a sand dune in Gangmun-dong, Gangneung

In northern Gyeongbuk, fortress sites are found concentrated in places such as Gimcheon, Sangju, Mungyeong, and Yeongju. However, whether these fortresses were indeed initially constructed during the Maripgan period remains to be determined through further archaeological investigations. The excavation of Gomosanseong Fortress in Mungyeong revealed that this defense structure dates back to the Maripgan period. The Gomosanseong Fortress, built at the point where two streams meet, has a perimeter of about 1,300 m. The fortress wall is built with hewn stone blocks. The outer wall measures approximately 7-13.8 m in elevation. Structures identified include gates, *gokseong* (defensive secondary walls outside a gate), chiseong (turrets), and a water reservoir. The receiving underground reservoir is about 12.3 m wide and 6.6-6.9 m long. The role of Gomosanseong Fortress appears to have been to safeguard Mungyeong from the enemy looming from beyond the Sobaek Mountain Range at the same time as defending roads leading to Sangju.





Some of the mountain fortresses in the Chungbuk region are those that were built near the borders abutting Baekje and Goguryeo. Samnyeonsanseong Fortress in Boeun is the best-known example of such borderland fortifications. This stone fortress built in the so-called pogok style—built in a manner so as to enclose a valley. It is located on Ojeongsan Mountain overlooking the township of Boeun and its plain. Built around an area that includes three mountain peaks and a valley, the fortress has a perimeter of 1,680 m. The height of the fortress wall varies depending on the lay of land at different points in its trajectory, ranging from 13 to 20 m. The wall was built by stacking flat stone blocks in an interlocking manner. At the base sections at each corner of the wall where there is a high concentration of load, stone blocks are stacked in such a way that each new course is slightly built in retreat from the edge of the course below it in a stair-like pattern. The fortress is equipped with four gates in the east, west, north, and the south, and seven crescent-shaped ongseong (secondary defensive wall built in front of a gate). Moreover, remains of five wells were identified along with drains. The fortress was first built in the thirteenth year of Maripgan Jabi's reign (470) and was later rebuilt in the eighth year of Maripgan Soji's reign (486). The structural aspect of the remaining portions indicates that the fortress was continuously rebuilt or expanded since the Maripgan period.

In the eastern coastal area, an earthen fortress was recently discovered in Gangmun-dong, Gangneung. This fortress, situated near Gyeongpodae, lies close to the sea and is built on a dune named Jukdobong with an elevation of 8 to 26 m above sea level. The earthen fortress extends 404 m east to west and 165 m north to south and measures approximately 1,000 m in circumference. The earthen wall was built by filling a wooden frame with soil and it stands on a base made of at least four layers of pebbles and hewn stone blocks. Inside, pit dwellings and a water catchment system were identified along with a large quantity of pottery. Although there is no real consensus as to the date of construction of this fortress, findings from this site suggest that it can go as far back as to the late fifth century.

Specifically, some of the elements that emerged from the archaeological investigation of this site corroborate the content of the article in *Samguk sagi* on the construction of Niha Fortress, in the eleventh year of Maripgan Soji's reign (486), as well as the article on the establishment of Haseullaju in the thirteenth year of King Jijeung's reign (512).

# 2 Tombs and Burial Customs

## Burial Structures

The most notable change to tombs in the Yeongnam region during the Maripgan period occurred in their size. Tombs of gigantic proportions that appeared in this period belonged to members of the ruling elite and were meant to convey their elevated social status. True to their original intent, these tombs still manage to impress viewers today as symbols of a glorious past. They were initially built in the Gyeongju area and were later constructed throughout Silla territory. Another important characteristic is that stone was used for the first time for interior structures. Tombs of the Maripgan period fall into two main categories: stone-covered wooden chamber tombs that are found only in the Gyeongju area, and pit stone chamber tombs that are found outside Gyeongju. Pit-type stone chamber tombs have a stone chamber built inside a grave pit and they vary significantly in terms of the plan or type of stone masonry that was used.

During the Maripgan period, new tombs were built along various river banks around the Gyeongju basin where tomb groups from the Saro-guk period are located. A large cluster of tombs also formed in the capital city. This cluster of small mound tombs lies north of Wolseong and is known as the Wolseong-buk tumulus cluster, although it was referred to





Fig 6 Bird's eye view of the Hwangnam-dong tumulus group (the tomb at the leftmost of the cluster is Cheonmachong), Gyeongju

Fig 7 View of the Geumcheok-ri tumulus group, Gyeongju

as the Hwangnam-dong tumulus cluster until recently after its location in Hwangnam-dong. Another cluster of Maripgan-period tombs is found in Geumcheok-ri in a location at some distance west of the first one. Aggregated clusters of medium to large-size tombs exist only in these two places in the Gyeongju area.

Meanwhile, it was unambiguously established through archaeological investigations that tombs from these two sites are the so-called stone-covered wooden chamber tombs. What distinguishes this new style of tombs from wooden chamber tombs of the previous era is that the space between the burial chamber and the walls of the grave pit is filled with large pebbles of the size of a human head instead of earth, in addition to a stone mound built on top of the burial chamber. However, these tombs, which emerged through a gradual transformation of wooden chamber tombs, evolved continuously and over time gave rise to many variants that are distinct from one another in the way stone mounds are built. Early stone-covered wooden chamber tombs were essentially identical to wooden chamber tombs except for the pebbles that were used instead of earth to fill the space around the wooden chamber. Initially, pebbles were used mixed with soil. Later, as the grave pit became deeper, the volume of pebbles increased, and tombs with a wooden chamber that is entirely surrounded by pebbles eventually emerged. Tombs with stone piles on top of the wooden chamber appeared next. In the final stage of evolution, the wooden chamber was built at the ground level and was surrounded by stone piles with the help of a wooden frame set up around it.

One of the reasons that stone-covered wooden chamber tombs account for the bulk of tombs in Silla's capital is that chiefs of the various communities around the Gyeongju basin moved there during the transition from the Saro-guk period to the Maripgan period and chose this new style of burial structure as an insignia of their identity. In other words, following the establishment of the six bu, members of the ruling elite who belonged to the bu continued to build stone-covered wooden chamber tombs.

The clusters of large stone mound tombs in Gyeongju are also dotted with a number of smaller tombs in a style known as pit stone chamber tombs. Not only are they more modest in size than tombs with a stone mound, but they also contain far fewer grave goods. These tombs are therefore likely to belong to people of lesser social status. Wooden chamber tombs in a tradition slightly predating pit wooden chamber tombs exist as





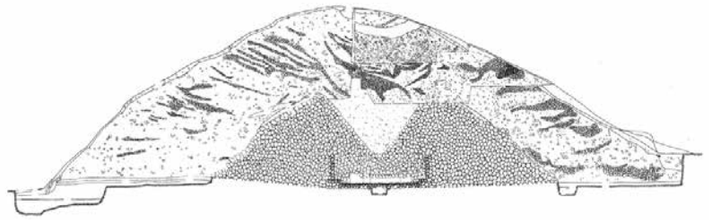


Fig 8 Profile drawing of the Cheonmachong Wooden chamber tomb covered with stone and an earthen mound in Gyeongju that demonstrates the presence of an aboveground level burial chamber

Fig 9 Piles stone portion revealed at the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong after the removal of the earthen mound, Gyeongju

well. The interred of these tombs also appear to be of an inferior social status compared to those buried in stone-covered wooden chamber tombs. Sites such as Sara-ri, where all three types of tombs are found side-by-side with one another, support this view. Tomb C10 in the Jjoksaem District is a large wooden chamber tomb with a secondary chamber that received much attention for the excavation of armor, including a horse armor, and also tends support to this idea. Finally, jar tombs, the last type, were mostly used for infants or small children, as was the case in previous era, and were built as part of other types of burial structures rather than as standalone tombs.

The largest of the tombs found within the ancient capital area of Gyeongju are those with an aboveground burial chamber. According to

an estimate made during the colonial period, there was a total of one hundred fifty-five stone mound tombs in this area. However, there must have originally been countless more, both big and small, which still lie underground and are yet to see the light of the day. These tombs still waiting to be uncovered are believed to date from the Maripgan period and the early Middle Ancient period and belong to members of the ruling elite that made up the six bu. Although there was a general tendency during the

Maripgan period of building tombs in the area northwest of Wolseong, this is far from a fast the rule. Even if no definitive statement can be made as to the exact pattern of their grouping, given how the political system at

Fig 10 View of the excavation of burial No.C-10 at Jjoksaem District, Gyeongju

Fig 11 Grave goods lying inside the wooden coffin at Cheonmachong, Gyeongju





that time consisted of six bu, or six independent divisions, separate clusters of tombs for each of these six divisions could have developed over time. In addition to the existence of separate clusters, individual tombs varied in design and style, even if they shared the same basic structure. Also, some of them were couple tombs and some others were built for three or more people. According to how grave goods were placed, in tombs of the earliest generation they were laid inside a secondary chamber, set up inside a separate pit with the two chambers aligned vertically following the practice from the previous era. Tombs of the subsequent generation had a single chamber, and grave goods were placed near the head and feet of the body of the deceased. Tombs with two chambers located side-by-side and set up inside the same pit also appeared around the same time. Finally, tombs with grave goods placed near the head appeared, followed by those with grave goods located near the feet.

What is unique about stone-covered wooden chamber tombs of the Gyeongju area is that some of them have two mounds, three, or even more mounds. Twin-mound tombs, the most basic type of tombs with more than one mound, are built by removing the hoseok, the retaining stone slabs, surrounding the base of the original mound and creating a second mound next to it. In the case of tombs with three or more mounds, new mounds are sometimes added without dismantling existing retaining slabs. In other instances, a mound seems to have been created between two single-mound

Fig 12 View of Hwangnamdaechong, a gourd-shaped dual mound tomb in Gyeongju

Fig 13 Five tombs that are closely clustered together in Section B of the Jjoksaem District (B1 to B4, B6), Gyeongju.

tombs by removing some retaining slabs from each of them.

At approximately the time when stone-covered wooden chamber tombs became the standard style for large tumuli in Gyeongju, large-sized tombs also started to be built outside the capital area. Clusters of large stone mound tombs are found in most areal centers that were previously the seats of small polities during the Jinhan and Byeonhan period. The interior structure of these tombs is either a pit stone chamber or a stone chamber with a side entrance. The background to the emergence of stone burial chambers of this type is difficult to guess as very few wooden chamber tombs from the preceding period from which they could have derived have been identified. Tombs with a stone chamber that are located in places such as Busan and Gyeongsan were clearly modeled on earlier tombs with a wooden chamber. It is therefore possible that this was the case with stone chamber tombs in other areas as well. However, it is equally plausible that stone chambers were adopted independently of the style of existing wooden chamber tombs. For example, in places such as Daegu and Changnyeong, there is a great disparity between tombs within the same cluster. At any rate, Maripgan-period Silla tombs that are located outside the Gyeongju area exhibit highly variable characteristics, all the while sharing





Fig 14 Bokcheon-dong tomb group in Busan

the same basic structure of a pit stone chamber tomb or a stone chamber tomb with a side entrance.

There is little disagreement among historians regarding the structure of the stone chamber of pit tombs, as they have been discovered virtually intact. Nevertheless, the fact that these stone chambers have a stone lid is worthy of note. The existence of a stone lid sets these burial chambers apart from wooden chamber tombs of the previous period in addition to stone-covered wooden chamber tombs of the Gyeongju area. A great example that can help us understand how wooden chamber tombs evolved to eventually give rise to pit stone chamber tombs is provided by the Bokcheon-dong cluster in Busan. What we can surmise from tombs in this cluster is that initially only the lateral sides of the wooden chamber was replaced by stone piles. Pit-type stone chamber tombs proper emerged later when the structure was covered with a stone slab.

While the Bokcheon-dong cluster is made up of tombs that predate large mound tombs, there is another cluster in Busan located in Yeonsan-dong that consists mainly of large mound tombs. Burial chambers inside the tombs in the Yeonsan-dong group are stone chambers, identical in their basic structure to the tombs of Bokcheon-dong that are set inside a

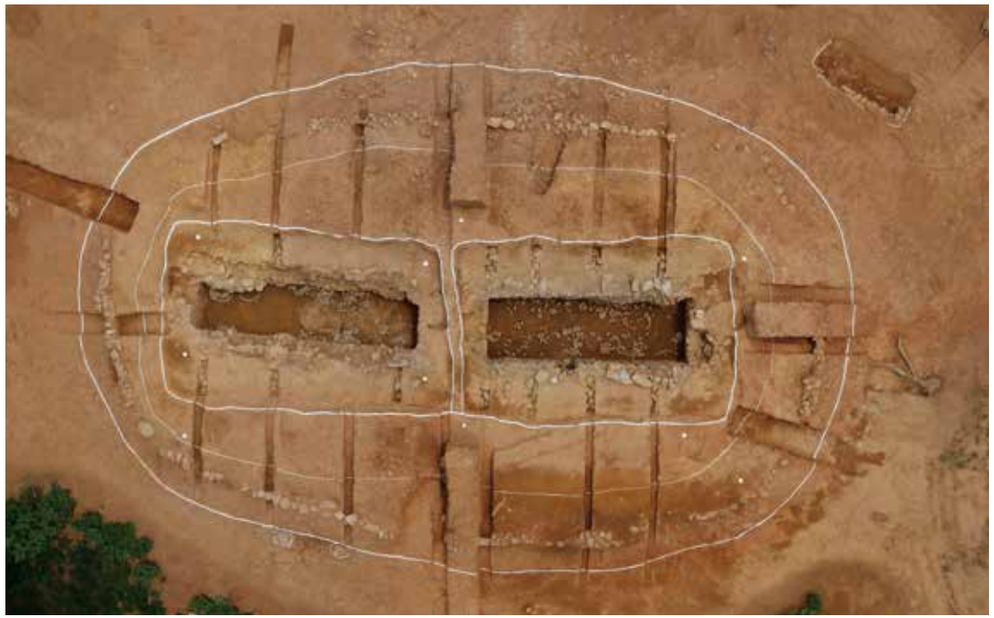


Fig 15 Tomb M3 of Yeonsan-dong, Busan, a pit stone chamber tomb with a secondary chamber for grave goods

Fig 16 Bukjeong-ri tumulus group in Yangsan





Fig 17 Gyo-dong tumulus group, Changnyeong

rectangular underground pit. In contrast, in the Bukjeong-ri group in the Yangsan area, all tombs without exception have an underground stone chamber with a side opening. A well-known example is tomb No. 10, which was given the name “Couple Tomb of Yangsan” when it was first excavated during the colonial period. A similar stone chamber with a side entrance was discovered in Hwangnam-dong tomb No. 151 in Gyeongju.

In Changnyeong, burial structures vary depending on the area. In the Gyenam-ri tumulus group in Gyeseong, wooden chamber tombs of a transitional style that are surrounded by stone piles have been discovered. These tombs are sometimes classified as stone chamber tombs with a wooden lid. Tombs of the Gyo-dong group have stone chambers with a rather long corridor leading to the side entrance. The Songhyeon-dong group is located not far from the Gyo-dong group and has typical aboveground stone-chamber tombs with a side entrance.

Burial architecture tends to show variations depending on the area, as they do in Daegu. Tombs in the Seongsan-dong group in Hwawon have pit-style stone chambers that are partly underground and that were built with crushed stone. On the other hand, in the Dalseong group - the largest tumulus group in Daegu and its vicinity, some of the tombs have distinctive-appearing burial chambers that were built using stone slabs while some have crushed stone-built chambers. The former were considered since their

first discovery during the colonial period as a variant of stone chamber tombs with a side entrance. However, the investigation of similar tombs in the Seongsan-dong tumulus group in Seongju and the Hwangsang-dong group in Gumi revealed that they were in fact a type of pit-style stone chamber tombs. Meanwhile, in the Guam-dong tumulus group in Chilgok that is located in the environs of Daegu, pit-style tombs have been discovered with an extremely narrow, long chamber and whose mound is built mainly in stone.

In the Gyeongsan area, there exist tombs with a burial chamber that was carved out of the bedrock. These highly unusual burial structures are referred to as "rock-pit wooden chamber tombs," as some sort of wooden structure is present inside the rock chamber. However, "wooden chamber tomb" may be a misnomer, given the presence of a cover stone slab and the fact that wooden structures do exist in some stone chamber tombs such as the pit stone chamber tombs of the Bokcheon-dong group. On the other hand, tombs in the Buksa-ri group, located in the same general area, are classical pit stone chamber tombs. Meanwhile, the Sinsang-ri group is composed mainly of stone-covered wooden chamber tombs.

Tombs in the Geumseongsan tumulus group in the Tap-ri area of Uiseong differ slightly from classical stone-covered wooden chamber tombs and are sometimes designated as "derivative" stone-covered wooden chamber tombs for this reason. Variants of stone-covered wooden chamber

Fig 18 Wide view of the excavation of the Imdang tumulus group, Gyeongsan





tombs of this type have rarely been encountered elsewhere. Uiseong's location in a geographic passageway toward inland areas northwest of Gyeongju might explain this choice of burial structure to a certain extent. The Seongsan-dong tumulus group in the Seongju area is mainly populated with pit stone chamber tombs built with either crushed stone or stone slabs, as is the case with the Dalseong tumulus group in Daegu. Moreover, the excavation of tombs of the Naksan-dong group in Seonsan uncovered a

Fig 19 Main burial chamber inside Daeri-ri tomb No. 2 (A1), Uiseong

Fig 20 Seongsan-dong tomb No. 38, Seongju

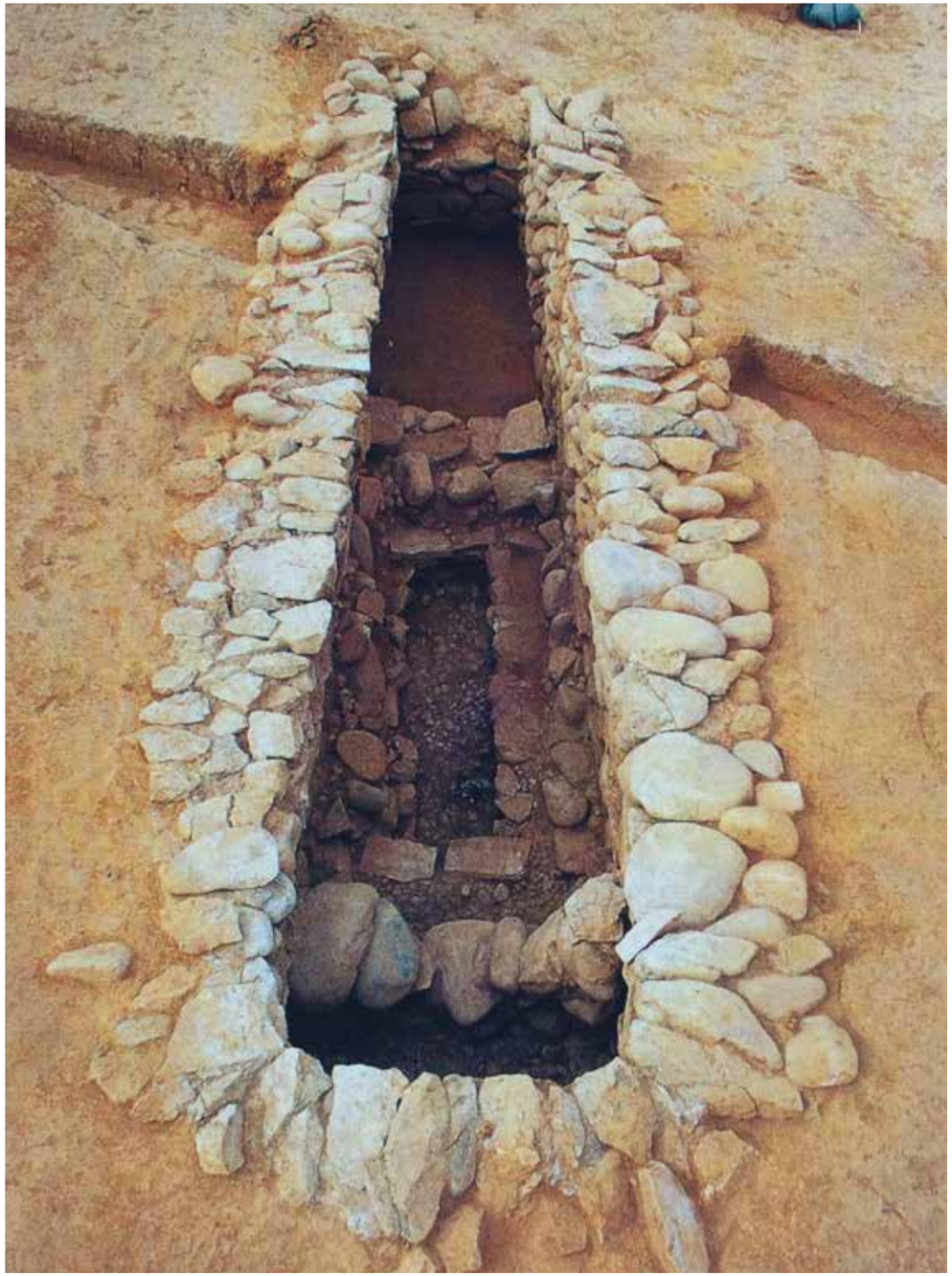


Fig 21 Chodang-dong tomb A-1, Gangneung





long aboveground stone chamber with a side entrance that has a trapezoidal cross-section. Long stone chambers with a side opening of this type were also discovered in the Byeongseong-dong tumulus group in Sangju and seem to be from a slightly later era.

Pit stone chamber tombs exist also in the environs of Gangneung on the East Coast. In the Chodang-dong group, the most important tumulus cluster in the general area, pit stone chamber tombs co-exist with wooden chamber tombs. Tomb No. 1 of Locality A, for instance, is a pit tomb with a long and narrow stone chamber covered with a gigantic stone slab. The four walls were built by stacking crushed stones of various sizes, and about two- thirds of the area of the floor is covered with a cement of lime and pebbles. Some divider walls are also present. Inside the stone chamber, at a level slightly lower than the floor, a stone coffin was found built with crushed stone and covered with a stone slab.

In summary, Silla tombs vary widely in their interior structure according to the geographical area, with great disparities existing even between tombs in the same area. This areal diversity may be due to the fact that local chiefs and ruling elite groups consistently adhered to a chosen style of burial structure that corresponded to and reflected their own conception of the afterlife and expressed their individuality through it. Moreover, if one considers how the emergence of large-sized mound tombs coincided with the progress made in Silla's indirect rule of its provinces, areal variations in burial structures may also be the expression of a desire on the part of local chiefs to break free from the rule of the central government.

## Funeral and Burial Customs

Death comes to all, no matter how great or small. In order to overcome the fear of the inevitable end to life, people imagined an afterlife. As great as the fear of one's own death was the grief of bereavement. Although the way people coped with the loss of the loved ones varied from culture to culture and individual to individual, the ruling elite of ancient societies found consolation in sumptuous funerals. They built gigantic tombs in which they interred with the dead all their personal belongings and even retainers who attended on them. In Korean language, funeral customs are referred to as *sangjang* which literally means bereavement and burial. Bin is the term that

refers to lying in state, during which the body of the deceased rests in a coffin and respects are paid to the deceased.

Written records related to the funeral customs practiced in Silla are exceedingly rare. This is also the case with funeral customs of Goguryeo and Baekje. The details of Silla funeral customs are largely missing, therefore, also for the Maripgan period. One of the rare pieces of information available is the mention in *Sui shu* that in Silla, the bereaved wore the mourning dress for a period of one year following the death of a family member. However, whether this information is descriptive also of funeral customs in an earlier period of Silla's history such as the Maripgan period is unclear. Silla tombs from the Maripgan period are not only impressive in their proportions, but also contain a vast amount of grave goods that are either items that were used by the deceased while living or were meant to be used in the next life in the world of spirits. Furthermore, servants were killed in sacrifice and buried together with the deceased so that they may attend on him or her in the next life. These various archaeological findings, therefore, offer at least some insight into the burial customs observed in Silla, as well as their conception of death and belief in life after death.

In terms of the quantity of grave goods recovered, Maripgan-period tombs surpass Silla tombs from any other period. The huge quantity of metal artifacts discovered in tombs from this period might be only a portion of the goods originally interred, if one considers how items made of organic materials such as wood, textile, and paper must have decayed and disappeared over the centuries. Meanwhile, there is a possibility that all of the grave goods were items intended for use in the next life. For one thing, grave goods are usually placed in different places inside a tomb, formingdistinct groups of items. Grave goods discovered in ancient tombs are generally classified according to material into metal (bronze or iron), jade and stone, pottery, animal bone, bamboo, wooden, and lacquerware items. Grave goods are also classified according to intended use into horse fittings, weaponry, farming implements and tools, ritual objects, pottery, and metal. This sort of classification served the practical purpose of sorting artifacts but is hardly useful for understanding the significance of grave goods. A better way is to classify them according to their function within the funeral process or in relation to the deceased. In China, for example, grave goods are divided into six categories including ritual objects and musical instruments, everyday items, shrouds and clothes, talismans and sacramental objects, tributary offerings, and vases with inscriptions.





Ritual objects and musical instruments have been only rarely discovered in Korean tombs. The same is true also for talismans, sacramental objects, and vases with inscriptions. These three categories are therefore somewhat irrelevant to Korea. By applying the Chinese classification system mutatis mutandis, it is conceivable to divide grave goods from Maripgan-period tombs into three main types: everyday items, status items (mainly clothing), and tributes (ritual objects). However, it is difficult at the current juncture to assign precise functional significance to grave goods found in the Korean peninsula.

Excavation results suggest that grave goods were not interred in a tomb all in a single episode, but were progressively offered and buried in different stages of its construction. As an example, let us examine the cases of grave goods that were discovered in the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong.

The grave goods were found inside or outside the wooden burial chamber, and also in the secondary chamber. The grave goods in the secondary chamber appear to be everyday items intended for use by the deceased in the next life that were placed there in a single episode. Objects lying in and outside the main chamber can be divided according to their precise location. Those outside the chamber are found in four main locations: (1) the summit of the burial mound, (2) inside the burial mound, (3) the earthen layer of the stone pile section, and (4) above the chamber. Those inside the main burial chamber are either (5) on the stone platform surrounding the burial chamber and the middle chamber in which the burial chamber is nested, (6) above the burial chamber, (7) inside the grave good compartment within the chamber, or (8) inside the wooden coffin. Now, by linking the locations of grave goods with the various

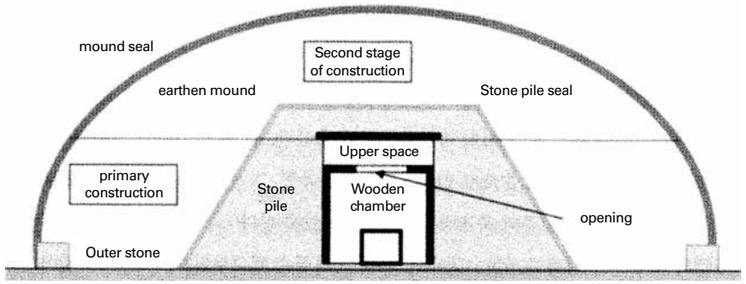



Fig 22 Cross-sectional view of a stone-covered wooden chamber tomb with an aboveground-style burial chamber

stages in the construction of a tomb, one is able to infer the significance of different types of objects. The process of constructing the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong may have consisted of roughly thirteen stages, as follows:

(A) Selection of the burial site: a burial site was chosen at a place close to ancestral graves.
(B) Groundwork: the ground was prepared at the selected locations of the main and secondary chambers.
(C) Digging of the grave pit: two pits were dug in the ground for the main and secondary chambers.
(D) Construction of the outer chambers: the outer wooden chambers in which the main and secondary chambers were to be nested were built (in the case of the main chamber, the outer chamber has a ceiling with a hatch door). Stone piles were created around and above the main chamber and the secondary chamber, at the same time as the lateral section of the earthen mound (exterior elements such as hoseok, the retaining stone panels, were set up at this time).
(E) Construction of the middle chamber: another layer of panels was set up on the inner side of the outer chamber of the main chamber, and a narrow platform was created between the middle and outer wall panels by piling up crushed stone.
(F) Construction of the inner walls of the burial chamber: the inner walls of the main chamber were built by dividing it into two compartments, one for the body of the deceased and the other for grave goods, separated by a low-rising wall. A stone pile platform was also created between the inner and middle walls.
(G) Laying out of the body of the deceased: the body of the deceased was laid prone inside the burial compartment of the main chamber, either directly or in a wooden coffin.
(H) Covering of the inner chamber: a top panel was placed on the top to cover the wooden chamber.
(I) Covering of the middle chamber: a top panel was placed also on top of the middle chamber in which the burial chamber nests.
(J) Closing of the outer chamber and covering of the secondary chamber: the hatch door of the outer chamber was shut, and the secondary chamber was closed at the top with a wooden panel.
(K) Creation of the top stone mound: a stone mound was created on top of the main and secondary chambers and was sealed with clay.
(L) Construction of the earthen mound: an earthen mound was built on top of the stone mound by using rammed earth methods for construction (outer stones could have been added at this time instead of stage D).
(M) Sealing of the burial mound: the burial mound was sealed in its entirety using clay.





Let us now look again at the eight locations of grave goods previously discussed in relation to these twelve stages of construction, the items found in (8) must have been either worn by the deceased or placed there along with the body, and their placement, therefore, must have occurred in stage (G) or earlier during the dressing of the deceased. Meanwhile, the items in (6) must have been placed there after stage (H), the items in (5) around the time when stage (H) or (I) took place, and the items in (4) after stage (J). The items in (3) are likely to have been put there after stage (K), items (2) during the stage (L) and, the items in (1) during or after stage (M). Finally, the items inside the secondary chamber were probably placed there before stage (J).

The fact that the grave goods were placed over successive stages in the construction of the tomb suggests that their placement could have accompanied by, and was part of, a ritualistic practice performed at each of these stages. These various ritualistic acts may be together considered as the burial process occurring after the laying of the deceased inside the tomb.

A more basic question one may ask is why the people of Silla buried so many grave goods with their dead. The fact that they built a separate chamber for holding grave goods, of which many are items that were actually used in everyday life, is certainly related to Silla people's belief in the afterlife. Silla people believed that after death, a person continues to lead his or her existence in the same manner as while living. In other words, the deceased would retain the same social status or privileges he or she enjoyed while living, and since life after death is essentially the same as life on earth, the dead would need to take all daily necessities with him or her on the journey to the world of spirits. The myriads of everyday items found in Silla tombs are, therefore, a reflection of this conception of death.

The custom of sacrificing retainers or servants to bury them with the dead is also explained by the belief in life after death. This cruel custom, known in Korean as *sunjang* was not confined to Silla and was practiced in many parts of the world at approximately the time when ancient nation-

Fig 23 Human sacrifices at the secondary chamber of Burial No. E Ⅲ-2, Joyang-dong, Gyeongju

states emerged. In Korea, this practice was observed in Buyeo, Goguryeo, and Gaya, in addition to Silla. Although no archaeological evidence is available concerning Buyeo and Goguryeo, written records such as *Sanguozhi* and *Samguk sagi* attest to the existence of the practice. According to these records, in Buyeo, when a king died, one hundred people were sacrificed and buried together with him. In the case of Silla, there is an article reporting that human sacrifices as part of the burial procedure were banned during the reign of King Jijeung. Clear archaeological evidence has been discovered as well in super-sized wooden chamber tombs with a stone mound such as Hwangnamdaechong and Cheonmachong.

Meanwhile, it is currently unknown whether the practice of *sunjang* is a native custom that existed prior to the emergence of Silla or was an imported practice. This practice was observed in Silla at a time significantly later than it was observed in Buyeo or Goguryeo, but at approximately the same time as in Gaya. The start of this custom coincides with the beginning of the construction of large mound tombs and the widespread use of gold jewelry and accessories. Members of the ruling elite of Silla and Gaya made their elevated social status ostensible through splendid gold jewelry and accessories and, upon death, were buried in majestic tombs, so that they may continue in the afterlife the opulent lifestyle befitting their status. The popular practice of sacrificing retainers is also a reflection of the power of the ruling class and a ubiquitous belief in the afterlife in this society.





3

# Clothing and Jewelry

## Clothing and Jewelry According to Written Records

There are few records about how Silla people dressed during the Maripgan period in the *Samguk sagi* or in any Chinese historic records. Exchanges with the Asian continent were scarce during the Maripgan period. Although Silla once sent envoys to the Former Qin Dynasty in the late fourth century, no other occurrence of this type was registered thereafter during this period. Diplomatic ties with the southern Chinese dynasties were established only in the later period. This lack of exchange in Silla of the Maripgan period can be inferred, for example, from the "Account of Silla" in *Liang Shu* [Book of Liang]: "In the second year of the Putong reign, King Beopheung of Silla sent envoys to the Liang Dynasty for the first time. Silla envoys together with envoys from Baekje paid tributes to the Emperor."

In *Zhou Shu* [Book of Zhou], we find descriptions of how people of Goguryeo and Baekje were dressed. It is said that in Goguryeo, "officials wore two plumes on their headdress, which clearly distinguished them from the general populace." People in Baekje are said to "put a plume on either side of their hat when attending an official meeting or a memorial service." Meanwhile, in *Sui Shu*, we read: "People in Silla wear similar clothes to people in Goguryeo and Baekje." Although it is unclear whether the description of the plumed hat in *Zhou shu* and *Sui shu* is information

related to the Maripgan period, such hats have been found in tombs of this period. Therefore, male members of Silla's rule elite of the Maripgan period appear to have donned a plumed hat either routinely or only for important events. Another important piece of evidence related to this topic is the Goguryeo stele in Chungju. The inscription on the front of the stele reads: "Clothes with gold details were provided… Officials were ordered to supply costumes for high and low-ranking officers." Although scholarly opinion remains divided as to the time of the construction of this stele, with some dating it to the early fifth century and some others to the late fifth century, the content of the epigraph clearly shows that Goguryeo and Silla had an unequal relationship, with the latter assuming the role of a vassal to the former. The passage cited above depicts the scene in which the crown prince of Goguryeo bestowed clothes on the Silla king and his courtiers. Much as when Northern Wei's emperor offered clothes to Goguryeo's ruler, this gesture signifies a suzerain-vassal relationship between two countries. Also, the clothes offered by the Goguryeo prince to members of Silla's ruling elite are likely to have been official courtly apparel of Goguryeo rather than general clothes.

## Gold Jewelry and Accessories

In stark contrast to the scarcity of written records related to how people of Silla dressed, there are literally hoards of jewelry and accessories that have been recovered from tombs. An exhaustive array of accessories from headdresses to footwear is available from this period. Unfortunately, however, no clothing has survived except for some textile fragments.

In gold and silver jewelry and accessories, the distinctive style of Silla as we know of it appears to have been forged mostly around the time when the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong was constructed. It should be noted that until then, very few people possessed gold jewelry and accessories. However, by the time that the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong was constructed, more people had access to these luxury items. Gold jewelry and accessories also fully acquired the signature style of Silla at this time. Gilt-bronze crowns were replaced by gold crowns, with deceased kings and royals buried wearing such crowns. Gold bracelets also appeared around this time. Jewelry and accessories produced increased in variety to include





Fig 24 Gold crown of the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 25 Gold crown of Geumgwanchong, Gyeongju

belt ornaments, earrings, necklaces, rings, and ornamental footwear, and became more elaborate and sumptuous-looking.

The most representative of gold items of Silla are without a doubt crowns. They have only been discovered in tombs of royals from the Maripgan period, and from no other periods of Silla's ten century-long history. The scarcity of gold crowns is a testament to their exclusive nature as prestige items reserved for royalty. Silla crowns have an unmistakable appearance characterized by a tree branch-like three-pronged upright part that springs from the circlet on the front, and two antler-shaped upright parts on either side. They appear to have been part of ceremonial attire rather than for everyday wear. The three-pronged projection at the front center represents tree branches but is simplified into a trident-like shape. The two projections on either side of them seem like less stylized representations of antlers. Over time, the shape of the three branch-like projection changed somewhat, with changes also observed in the numbers of bean-shaped jade pendants and bead strings. Moreover, carved surface patterns on the headband and projections show an increased level of complexity.

Silla crowns from the Maripgan period were made either of gold, gilt-bronze, or silver. A total of five gold crowns were discovered, all of them from Gyeongju-area tombs, namely, the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong,

Geumgwanchong, Seobongchong, Geumnyeongchong, and Cheonmachong. Silver crowns are more rare, as only one example has been discovered thus far. Several dozen gilt-bronze crowns have been identified, if those found in tombs located in areas outside Gyeongju are included in the number. Trees and deer are decorative motifs popularly used in Silla crowns, as they were considered links that connect the earth with the heavens. Gilt-bronze crowns were found not just in the tombs of Gyeongju-based royalty or aristocrats. They were frequently discovered also in tombs belonging to local chiefs in Silla's former provinces. Gilt-bronze crowns are virtually identical to gold crowns in shape, but are usually missing the antler-shaped uprights. In other words, have only the trident-like upright part at the front.

Aside from these, crowns that are shaped like a tall cap and have wing or plume-shaped ornaments have been also discovered in Silla tombs. Crowns of this kind, commonly designated as hat-style crowns, have survived in some cases without the crown itself. The crown proper, made of white birch bark or silk, decayed and disappeared, leaving only the metal ornaments. This cap-style crown, designed to snugly cover a man's top hair knot, appears to have been the everyday headdress worn by members of Silla's ruling class.

Quite a few of them have been found over the years. Some are made of gold, silver or gilt-bronze, and some others of white birch bark. The ones made of organic materials such as birch bark are the most common, followed by silver crowns, and gold and gilt-bronze examples make up the minority. The plume-shaped ornaments are made of gold, gilt-bronze, or silver in the cases of the crowns discovered in the Gyeongju area. Outside the Gyeongju area, they are mostly made of silver, with a small number made of gilt-bronze. Only two tombs, Geumgwanchong and Cheonmachong, contained an array of gold items rather than a few isolated items. Meanwhile, silver and gilt-bronze items are widely found throughout the former territory of Silla. The two ornaments on either side of the crown resemble a pair of bird wings but are likened in written records to plumes.

A pair of gold earrings is invariably found in any Gyeongju tomb of a substantial size. Silla gold earrings are great testaments to the workmanship of the goldsmiths of this period and are also consummate expressions of aesthetic vision of its people. They were the most basic jewelry items worn by both men and women of Silla to indicate an elevated social status. In other words, earrings were the essential markers distinguishing people at the top rung of Silla society from the general populace. Excavation results





Fig 26 Gold crown of Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

Fig 27 Gold crown ornament of Geumgwanchong, Gyeongju

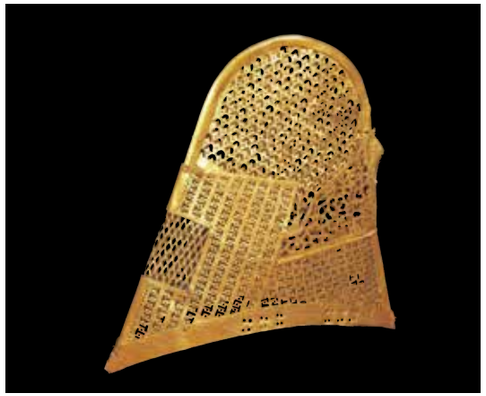


Fig 28 Cap-style gold crown of Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

Fig 29 Gold earrings of the tomb of Hwango-ri, Gyeongju

Fig 30 Gold earrings of the Bomun-ri tomb, Gyeongju

show that although there are tombs containing only earrings and no other pieces of jewelry, tombs in which crowns or belt ornaments are found without a pair of earrings are absent. What this means is that while earrings were universally worn by all members of the ruling class, items such as crowns and belt ornaments were associated with the highest strata of the ruling class and worn by an exclusive few in addition to earrings.

The style of Silla earrings is reminiscent of Goguryeo earrings in many respects. Silla earrings consist of three parts, the main loops that attach to the earlobes, the middle loops, and the pendants. Compared to the ones from other neighboring states, Silla earrings are more varied in the shape and appearance of the middle loops. Earrings from this period are divided into two types according to the thickness of the main loops: thick-loop earrings and thin-loop earrings. Of these two types, thick-loop earrings tend to be less varied in design than thin-loop earrings. Meanwhile, thin-loop earrings are often discovered together with long swords, suggesting that they could have been earrings for men, as opposed to thick-loop earrings which would have been for women.

Thick-loop earrings grew significantly in the diameter of the main loops by the time of construction of the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, and a larger number of gold sheets were used for their production. In comparison, the middle loops were quite standardized from early on and there was no significant changes in size. Thin loop earrings were initially





Fig 31 Gold necklace discovered in a tomb at House No. 215, Noseo-ri, Gyeongju

rather similar to thick loop earrings, having similar middle loops and pendants. However, from the late fifth century on, they had greater morphological variability as well as more lavish detail.

Necklaces and chest ornaments unearthed from Silla tombs are no less magnificent than the earrings of this period. Necklaces made without a pair of earrings are absent. What this means is that while earrings were universally worn by all members of the ruling class, items such as crowns and belt ornaments were associated with the highest strata of the ruling class and worn by an exclusive few in addition to earrings.

In ancient societies, belts appear to have been an essential part of an official costume. This is perhaps the reason why belts that survive from ancient Korea are frequently adorned with precious metal ornaments and gemstones. Gold belts were discovered in only six stone-mound wooden coffin tombs located in Gyeongju, namely the south and north tombs of Hwangnamdaechong, Geumgwanchong, Seobongchong, Geumnyeongchong, and Cheonmachong. In all of these tombs except for the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, gold belts were found together with a gold crown. As was the case with gold crowns, wearing gold belts was probably not an act that was exclusively reserved for the king, and other members of royalty must have worn them as well. All gold belts and some silver belts have pendants that are often in the shape of a fragrance pouch, medicine jar, fish, whetstone, tongs, curved jade, or a ceramic vase.

The bracelets from the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong are among the oldest examples. The surface pattern of these bracelets are absent and

were made by bending a gold rod into a bangle shape. Some of them are also made with a hollow gold tube. Bracelets from the sixth century have raised knobs on the outer rim with glass inset such as the ones from Geumnyeongchong or had an absence of further decoration such as the ones from Cheonmachong. The most striking example of these rings date from the sixth century. The band is usually wider at the top of the ring, which is shaped either like a lozenge or a petal. The top surface is decorated with a knob made with cutout pieces of a gold sheet or gold granules. The ring can be also inset with an indigo or green-colored glass bead.

Silla elite mortuary footwear tend to be less ornate than those of

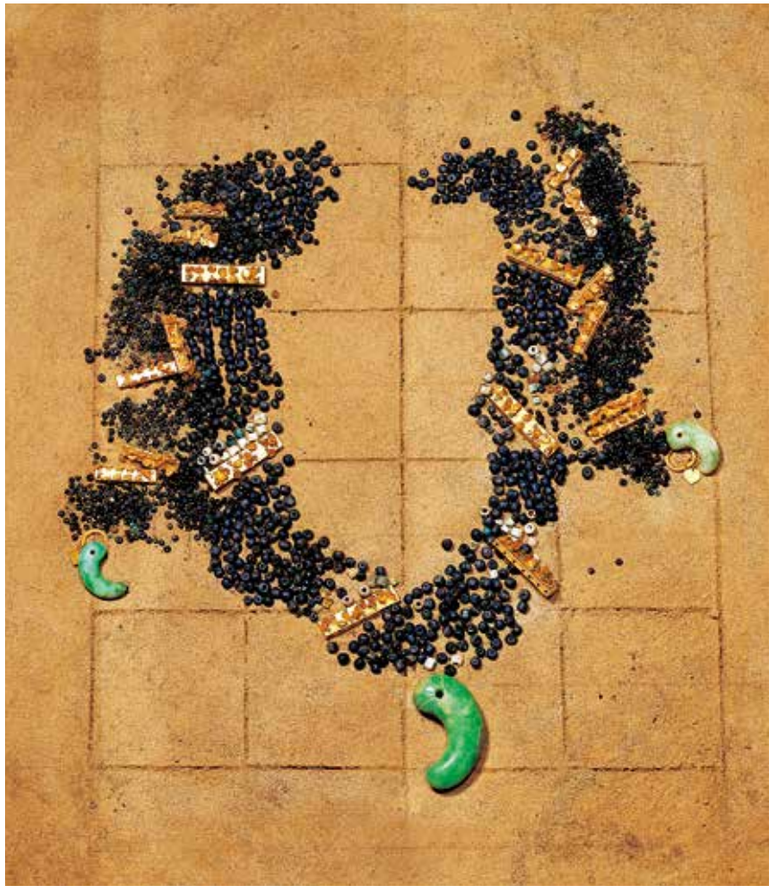


Fig 32 Chest ornament of the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju





Baekje. Some of them, such as the ones discovered in the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong and Tap-ri tomb No. 2 in Uiseong, have an openwork design in the shape of 凸 , while others are plain with no surface patterns - i.e. footwear from Geumnyeongchong and the couple tomb of Yangsan. Silla mortuary footwear is made similarly to those of Baekje by joining three metal sheets. However, they differ in the way the metal sheets for the upper part are joined together. Unlike Baekje footwear, whose left and right panels are joined at the toe and heel sections, two metal sheets

Fig 33 Gold belt with pendants discovered inside Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

Fig 34 Gold rings from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 35 Gold bangle bracelets of Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

Fig 36 Gilt-bronze footwear of the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

each enveloping the toe and heel section are joined on either side of the footwear. Gilt-bronze nails are hammered onto the overlapping edges of the two metal sheets. All Silla mortuary footwear is made of gilt-bronze. With decorations present also on the soles, the design is not very practical. The footwear found in the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, for instance, have numerous small pendants on the soles. Meanwhile, those from Geumgwanchong have their soles completely covered with carved lotus designs. This footwear, therefore, does not appear to have been intended for practical use, but probably was made specially for the deceased for their journey to the world of spirits.

As discussed above, jewelry and accessories found in the tombs of Silla royals and aristocrats as well as tombs of local chiefs vary significantly in terms of quantity as well as materials of which they are made. Of the various jewelry and accessory items discussed, those that are most exclusive and that most clearly signal differences in social status are crowns, gilt-bronze footwear, and rings. Gilt-bronze footwear are frequently found as part of a set of accessories that includes earrings, necklaces, belts, and bracelets.

Meanwhile, earrings, necklaces, and belts are among the most common





Fig 37 Gold crown of the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong in Gyeongju at the time of discovery

items discovered in Silla tombs, suggesting that they were less exclusive items compared to others, even if their possession was still restricted to the elite class. Jewelry and accessories buried in super-sized tombs such as those of kings tend to be complete sets of items, including a crown, earrings, a necklace, belt, bracelets, rings, and gilt-bronze footwear. Crowns, belts, bracelets and rings are always found in such tombs without exception. One thing that deserves attention is how the head of the deceased is dressed. In the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Geumgwanchong, Seobongchong, Cheonmachong, and Geumnyeongchong, the deceased was buried wearing a gold crown. In the case of the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong and Geumnyeongchong in which the original condition of burial can be more accurately understood, the crown was found in a position that completely covers the face of the dead.

Such patterns emerge less clearly in tombs located outside Gyeongju. The most important precious metal accessories in provinces of Silla are also crowns. According to the type of crown, cap-style crowns were found in the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong and other tombs from a similar time period. The only examples of tombs where cap-style crowns were found together with regular crowns are the couple tomb of Yangsan – in the section containing the remains of the male deceased – and Gyenam-ri tomb No. 1 in Changnyeong. All other tombs contained one or the other type of crown, but not both. In local tombs, it appears that precious metal jewelry and accessories were offered in significant amounts starting in the early fifth century. After a progressive increase in the amount of jewelry and accessories, complete sets including crowns, earrings, belts, and gilt-bronze footwear were offered starting in the late fifth century or the early sixth century

## Clothing Style Based on the Horse and Rider-shaped Pottery and Birch Bark Paintings

The horse and rider-shaped pottery discovered in Geumnyeongchong offers a rare insight into the physical appearance of Silla people as well as how they were dressed. Clothes are depicted in great detail in this pottery item shaped otherwise like a teapot or a spouted ewer. The horseman has a nose with a rather high bridge and a pointed chin, but, despite these sharp features, looks congenial enough perhaps thanks to his slightly closed eyes. The generously proportioned, stoutly built steed on which he is riding also contributes to this impression. The figure is captivating for its air of serenity mixed with liveliness. When seen from the profile, the spout at the front, the face of the horseman, and the tail of the horse form an arched line. The horse was probably given such a massive appearance out of a concern for visual balance and stability.

The headdress worn by the horseman has attracted special attention. The headgear represented seems to be a fabric hat of a sort with precious metal ornaments along the bottom edge. The conically shaped hat has a pointed tip and a thick bottom border. The hat is perched lightly on the head, and the two strings hanging from either side of the hat are tied together below the chin. Although further evidence is needed for any conclusive statement





Fig 38 Horse and rider-shaped pottery of Geumnyeongchong, Gyeongju

Fig 39 Horse and rider-shaped pottery (detail)

Fig 40 Detail of a rider in the birch bark painting of Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

on this topic, the hat appears to be similar to the cap-style crown worn by members of Silla's ruling elite during the Maripgan period, as a casual headdress.

Meanwhile, a painting on a birch bark panel that depicts a horseman and auspicious birds, accompanied by floral and lozenge designs was discovered inside Cheonmachong, along with the painting of a flying horse. The panel, made by juxtaposing two layers of birch bark that are both in the shape of a hollow disk and fastened together with quilt stitches, is painted both on the front and back. Its use is unclear; some scholars propose that this is part of a saddler, while others conjecture that it is a brim of a hat. One of the various scenes depicted in this birch bark painting shows a man riding on horseback. The horseman with long hair let down dons a *jeogori* top and a pair of baggy pants, an outfit that conforms to the description of the basic dressing style for men during the Three Kingdoms period found in written records. The top and bottom of the outfit are in different colors.





# 4 General Artifacts

## Pottery

Toward the late fourth century, a major change occurred in the pottery tradition of the Yeongnam region. Two distinct traditions emerged at this time with the Nakdonggang River as the dividing line. The Silla pottery tradition formed in areas lying east of the Nakdonggang River, and the Gaya pottery tradition in areas west of it. This phenomenon was probably due to significant political changes that occurred in these two regions and which entailed changes in pottery production methods. In other words, leading polities in these two regions either consolidated to form an ancient nation-state such as Silla or were in the process of doing so, as was the case with Gaya. In both cases, the control of territories and resources by political leaders strengthened around this time, resulting also in an increased control over pottery production. As a consequence of this, pottery produced in these respective regions became much more homogenous in terms of types and styles.

Silla and Gaya pottery are quite similar to each other and are both distinct from Goguryeo and Baekje pottery. However, they also differ greatly in details. The most obvious difference is the distribution of openings in the foot of a pottery item. The openings on the tall foot are placed in two staggered rows in Silla pottery, while in Gaya pottery, they are stacked

straight. Furthermore, Silla goblets are quite deep, unlike the ones from Gaya which tend to be shallower. Meanwhile, the knob on lids is flared in shape in Silla pottery, appearing as if it is an inverted foot, whilst it is mostly in the form of a round button in Gaya pottery. There is also a clear difference concerning surface patterns. Silla pottery often has incised triangular, fish-net, circular, or animal patterns, created with the help of a bamboo knife. In contrast, Gaya pottery vessels are mainly decorated with dotted lines. Some of the items that are most informative of the early stage of Silla pottery are found in Wolseong-ro tomb No. Ga-13 in Gyeongju. The earliest example of a goblet on a tall foot with rectangular openings in a staggered arrangement was recovered in this tomb. Although researchers are mostly in agreement on the fact that this is a king's tomb, opinions are divided as to which king. Some scholars think that the tomb belongs to King Naemul (r. 356-401), and others think it is the tomb of King Nulji (r. 417-458).

Fig 41 Mounted cup with cover from No. Ga-13, Wolseong-ro, Gyeongju





During the Maripgan period, pottery was produced in massive quantities and was offered in tombs as grave goods in almost equally massive quantities. Goblets and long-necked jars on feet were the two most common types of vessels that were produced in this period. Cylindrically shaped or flared dish stands, straight-necked jars with a foot, jar lids, cup-like vessels and soft-pottery bowls of a reddish brown hue were also produced at this time.

Goblets changed comparatively rapidly over time in shape and design. Early goblets such as the ones uncovered inside the third and fourth chambers of Hwangnam-dong tomb No. 109, are mounted on a tall flared foot consisting of three to four separate tiers. Goblets found in the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong and tombs constructed thereafter tend to have a slightly shorter two-tiered feet with silhouettes that are less flared. The shape of the bottom edge of the foot also changed. In early goblets, the bottom edge of the foot was thin and flat. Tombs built around the time of construction of the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong generally contain goblets mounted on a foot with a thin and flat bottom edge, together with those that have a foot with a rounded rim. After this period, the foot with a rounded bottom rim gradually became the standard for goblets. Goblets also became progressively thinner over time.

The color and hue of pottery also varied over time. Early goblets were fired at a high temperature, and their cross-section tended to be dark

Fig 42 Pottery items of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju (set 1)

Fig 43 Pottery items of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju (set 2)

Fig 44 Goblets of the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

maroon in color as a result. Later pottery such as vessels from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong and tombs of its generation (or subsequent examples) are gray in color. Meanwhile, some of the vessels discovered in the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Geumgwanchong, and other large Gyeongju tombs are black and glossy. The shape of lids underwent slight





Fig 45 Pottery discovered in Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

changes as well. The button or bead-shaped knobs in early lids were mostly replaced by those with flared top edges by the time that the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong was constructed. This latter type of knobs were used for the lids of not just for goblets but a wide variety of vessels including jars and long-necked jars.

Long-necked jars are another item that is illustrative of the characteristics of Silla pottery, even if not to the extent of goblets. Over time, long- necked jars changed gradually in appearance, especially in the length of the neck and shape of the mouth. Unlike goblets whose foot progressively became shorter, the neck of long-necked jars grew longer over time. Early variants had a comparatively shorter neck and often were without a lid. A few of the long-necked jars from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong were discovered with a lid, but these jars did not have an inner rim serving as a ledge on which the lid rests. Long-necked jars of the subsequent generation have a more flared neck with a clearly defined lid ledge. Finally, at approximately the time of construction of Cheonmachong and thereafter, a new type of jar appeared having a wide, flared mouth and is known as *bugaguyeongjanggyeongho*.

The surface of pottery was decorated with geometric patterns. Initially, highly varied surface patterns were applied to both the main body of a vessel and the lid. However, once into the sixth century, they were mostly decorated with simpler triangular or circular designs. Sometimes, small clay

Fig 46 Long-necked jar and dish stands of the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 47 Lidded goblets from the Gyo-dong tumulus group of Changnyeong





figures depicting humans or animals are attached to the surface, but these decorations are only seen on pottery discovered in Gyeongju-area tombs.

In the earlier part of this period, Silla vessels were discovered only in the area east of the Nakdonggang River. Later on, however, they were also recovered from places in Chungcheong-do such as Chungju and Cheongju as well as in eastern coastal areas all the way to localities lying north of Gangneung. In these places, Silla pottery was found together with Silla- style accessories. This distribution pattern is without a doubt a reflection of Silla's territorial expansion. Pottery was either brought into these new territories by people of Silla or was produced there in Silla style. The fact that Silla pottery was discovered in tombs of these areas, together with the presence of Silla-style jewelry, accessories, and clothes, supports this claim. It should be noted that Silla pottery of this period shows minor variations in style depending on the area. For example, pottery from Changnyeong, Seongju, and Uiseong, although they may be broadly defined as Silla- style pottery, are quite distinct from Gyeongju-area pottery or pottery from neighboring areas in detailed features. For this reason they are sometimes classified separately as independent area subgroups. On the other hand, pottery from Gyeongsan, Daegu, Ulsan, and Busan are virtually identical in style to those discovered in Gyeongju, suggesting the existence of closer interaction between these places and Silla's capital

## Weaponry and Horse Fittings

The fourth and fifth centuries were a period of tumultuous changes in the Yeongnam region. Wars of unification were in full swing around this time between small polities within the Jinhan and Byeonhan Confederacies. Evidence suggests that the production of weaponry and protective gear like body armor was accelerated. The fate of each of these statelets was entirely dependent on their ability to prevail in armed conflicts with their neighbors. Silla was certainly well aware of this, and from early on it did its utmost to further the development of advanced weapons and horse fittings.

Weapons produced during this period include both offensive weapons such as swords, daggers, and spears and defensive weapons such as armor, helmets, and shields. Weaponry can be also divided into those used in close quarters and from a long range. The ornate swords are one of the most


Fig 48 Tri-ring pommel swords (①South Tomb, Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju; ②Geumgwanchong, Gyeongju; ③Tomb No. M-1 at Munsan-ri, Dalsung-gun, Daegu) and Trefoil pommel swords (④Tomb Nos.10/11, Bokcheon-dong, Busan; ⑤North Tomb, Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju; ⑥Tomb No. 1, Hakmi-ri, Euisung)

exclusive weaponry items from this period and appear to be ceremonial accessories rather than actual weapons, if we take the example of the one found inside the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong. These swords, in other words, were part of ceremonial attire, likely forming a set with a crown and a belt. Ornate swords of Silla most often have a pommel with openwork design that represents three leaves or a dragon or a phoenix, or is in a trefoil shape.

There exist two main types of iron armor: plate and scale armor. Plate armor is made by assembling iron plates of various sizes that are either





Fig 49 Wooden stirrups covered with iron sheeting discovered in Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

Fig 50 Saddle decorated with beetle wings from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 51 Gilt-bronze horse harness ornaments (*boyobuunju*) of the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 52 Fish tail-style horse harness pendants from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 53 Heart-shaped horse harness pendants from Cheonmachong, Gyeongju





Fig 54 Painting of a flying horse of Cheonmachong, Gyeongju (left image is an infrared photo)

Fig 55 Bamboo sweat flaps with the painted image of a flying horse from Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

nailed together or linked together with leather strings. Scale armor is made by linking hundreds of small iron plates using leather strings. The armor worn by mounted warriors frequently represented in Goguryeo tomb murals, for instance is scale armor.

Equestrian equipment from this period includes horse bits, stirrups, saddles, as well as accessories such as horse bells, and horse brass (unju and haengyeop—see below). *Yundeung*, or loop-shaped stirrups with an arched tread, appear to have been popular in this period. Over time, the tread gradually widened. Meanwhile, some later stirrups, especially those entirely made of iron without wooden components, had a tread consisting of two separate iron pieces. The most magnificent of all horse fittings was no doubt the saddle. In the vast majority of cases, only the front and back metal panels (i.e. the pommel and cantle) are found as the saddle itself has decayed and disappeared. The gilt-bronze pommel and cantle, discovered in the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, have a dragon design all across the surface. The surface beneath the top plate with openwork design is densely covered with beetle wings, adding to the brilliant beauty of these pieces.

*Unju* are harness ornaments that are placed at various points where leather straps intersect on the back of a horse. Early unju were quite simple in design, made to serve their intended purpose of keeping straps separate from one another. Over time, however, they were embellished with precious metal accents in gold or silver, as horses were dressed up more sumptuously. The Goguryeo-style *boyobuunju* is a fine case in point. This *unju* is named after the boyo, a fluttering ornament that is attached to its top edge. *Haengyeop* are pendants hanging from the ends of the various straps of a horse harness. Silla *baengyeop* are typically shaped like a horizontally- long ellipse with the bottom edge finished like a fish tail. *Haengyeop* in the shape of a heart were also popularly made in Silla.

Otherwise, a number of sweat flaps have been discovered from Cheonmachong. Sweat flaps are attached on either side of a saddle to protect the rider from the horse's sweat or from mud. Particularly noteworthy is the pair made of white birch bark with a painting of a flying horse. Several layers of birch bark are sewn together and are surrounded at the edges by a leather piping. The flying horse is drawn in white against the red-painted birch bark background. The horse with its mane and tail fluttering in the wind is in a dynamic posture. The horse's mouth emits a white cloud of auspicious vapor. The four edges are decorated





with honeysuckle motifs painted in red, black, and green. More recently, during a new round of conservation treatment on Cheonmachong artifacts, another sweat flap with a decorative gilt-bronze plate with a flying horse in openwork was discovered.

## Metal Artifacts

Medium to large-sized tombs in the Gyeongju-area have yielded a wide variety of metal vessels. About one hundred such items have been discovered to date. Most of these vessels were either cast with molten metals or forged into shape with a hammer. Their types range from bowls and lidded bowls to clothes irons, tripod pots, cauldrons, jars, wash basins, meal trays, ladles, and steamers. While some of the items must have been household utensils used by members of royal or aristocratic families, many are likely to have been ritual vessels. Gold or silver goblets in a typical Silla style and long-necked jars cast in bronze are also among these items. However, the vast majority of them are vessels that are similar in appearance to those vessels from Central Plain-based continental dynasties or ritual vessels of Goguryeo. It is difficult to determine which of the metal vessels

Fig 56 Gold goblet of the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 57 Bronze tripod with handle from Geumgwanchong, Gyeongju

from Silla tombs are imported goods and which are replicas of non- local vessels that were produced locally. Lidded bowls that are found in the largest quantity, although influenced by lidded bowls of Goguryeo, are smaller in size and more ornate. The shape of the knob on the lid changed over time. Cross-shaped Goguryeo-style nobs were popular initially. Later, in the fifth century, many of these bowls had a lid with a bead or bird-shaped knob.

At approximately the time when Geumgwanchong and Singnichong were constructed, metal dishes were more lavishly decorated with carved designs. The tripod pot, discovered in Geumgwanchong, for instance, is not only a finely-crafted vessel, but is remarkable for the various intricate patterns carved on the surface. The round body has a dragon-shaped spout attached to one side, and a dragon motif also on either extremity of the long handle. The dragons in raised carving convey a great sense of volume. In contrast, the ladle from Singnichong has incised motifs such as dragons, birds, and honeysuckles. Meanwhile, a small silver cup discovered in the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong has a surface that is decorated with various repoussé motifs. This design is considered to show non-local influences, much like the surface design of the gilt-bronze footwear (*singni*) from Singnichong, after which this tomb was named.





Fig 58 Lidded silver bowl of the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 59 Silver cup discovered in the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

## Farming Implements and Tools

The single-most important factor contributing to the origins of the Three Kingdoms period in the Korean peninsula was the widespread use of iron weapons and tools. Not only were weapons made of iron, but farming implements and tools were also produced in iron, resulting in a dramatic increase in productivity. This helped accelerate the process of social division and gave rise to ancient state-level societies. As is well known, Silla possessed an advanced iron technology since the Saro-guk stage. Thanks to that, iron farming implements were in use in Silla from early times. By the Maripgan period, the variability of iron implements increased and they become available for virtually all types of farmwork, from ploughing to harrowing, to weeding and harvesting. Besides, these tools served as the prototypes for farming tools of the pre-modern era. Sometime after the fourth century, spades for irrigation work and hoes also appeared. In the sixth century, the introduction of plow blades resulted in plowing with oxen to become a standard practice across the country.

Iron tools also made a sizeable contribution to the overall growth of Silla. Two main types of iron tools were forging tools used in blacksmith shops for the production of weaponry and farming implements, and precision tools for processing gold and silver products. While tools such as iron

Fig 60 Various farming tools from Cheonmachong, Gyeongju





Fig 61 Iron axe heads from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

scythes or knives are usually found in small tombs, essential implements such as pitchforks, plowshares, plow blades, and forging tools have been discovered only in a small number of tombs. Such tombs are generally those of royal family members and aristocrats based in Gyeongju or of local chiefs in the provinces. Therefore, the possession of farming implements and tools also appears to have been associated with the social status of the owner. By reserving access to certain key resources for members of the elite, Silla's ruling class during the Maripgan period contributed to the maintenance of a stable social structure.

## Lacquerware and Textiles

The excavation of tombs of kings and other large tombs in Gyeongju during the colonial period led to the discovery of lacquerware items. The lacquerware items of the Geumgwanchong, Geumnyeongchong, and Cheonmachong tombs have surface motifs such as auspicious birds, lotus flowers, arabesque design, or triangular flame design in red, blue, or yellow that are still vivid and easily visible. A lacquerware item unearthed from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong notably bears an inscription in red that reads "*marang* (馬朗)." Meanwhile, another item discovered in the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong has the images of a phoenix and other types of birds, oxen, and dogs painted on its surface. In the paucity of paintings surviving from this period, these lacquerware items with painted motifs offer rare glimpses into this area of Silla's culture. An accessory belonging to an arrow holder discovered in Houchong is coated

Fig 62 Lacquerware item exhumed from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

in black. Meanwhile, a red lidded case discovered in the Bangnae-ri tomb in Gyeongju yielded evidence for the utilization of bone dust in the bottom coat of paint. Therefore, sophisticated techniques appear to have been used in lacquerware crafts already by this time.

It was important for members of Silla's ruling elite to make their exclusive social status as visible as possible. The prime means for displaying one's social standing was clothing. In Silla, the ancient society reputed for having the most static and closed social hierarchy of all peer nations, the types and colors of fabric used for clothes must have been tightly regulated from early times. In other words, permission for the use of certain fabrics or certain colors was granted to only a small elite group. The section of





Fig 63 Painted surface motifs on lacquerware fragments found in Singnichong, Gyeongju

*Samguk sagi* on government ranks and offices in Silla offers some insight into such practice.

However, clothing or textiles surviving from this period are exceedingly rare, making it nearly impossible to form a concrete picture of how people dressed at that time. One of the very few examples of textile items from this era is the silk fabric with color thread-woven patterns discovered in Cheonmachong which is part of a set of horse fittings. Another example is the hemp, ramie, and silk fabrics used in footwear that were discovered in the Imdang tumulus group in Gyeongsan. The hemp and ramie fabrics were woven with twisted yarn, while the silk fabric was woven with straight yarn.

# 5 Trade and Exchange

## Trade and Exchange with Chinese Dynasties

During the early part of the stone-covered wooden chamber tomb period, Silla tended to focus on Goguryeo in its external relations. Yet from the mid-fifth century and onward, Silla also formed close ties with Baekje and Gaya. Written records to this effect are corroborated by archaeological records. Nevertheless, whether Silla had a relationship of trade and exchange with the northern Chinese dynasties via Goguryeo as the intermediary is far from clear. During the Maripgan period, Silla does not seem to have been in any direct relationship with the southern Chinese dynasties.

Fig 64 Small brown-glazed vase with a wide lip from the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

However, a series of artifacts that appear to be of Chinese origin from the Eastern Jin to the Liu Song period including copper mirrors, bronze clothing irons, and a small brown-glazed jar with a wide lip were discovered in the north and south tombs of Hwangnamdaechong. How, then, did these objects reach Silla? Meanwhile, at Baekje archaeological sites dating from around the same time period, massive quantities of Chinese artifacts from the Wei-Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasty period have been found. This, in tandem with the fact that Silla formed a coalition with Baekje in 433, suggests that the items from the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechongcould could have arrived in Silla by way of Baekje, supposing that King Nulji is the occupant of the south tomb.





## Trade and Exchange with Goguryeo, Baekje and Gaya

During a time beginning the mid-fourth century, Silla maintained close ties with Goguryeo more than any other neighboring polities. As a matter of fact, Silla tombs of this period yielded large numbers of Goguryeo-style artifacts. A lidded bronze bowl from Houchong, a lidded silver bowl from Seobongchong, and a bronze jar with four handles from Geumgwanchong are some of the examples. These three items are imported goods from Goguryeo that were brought to Silla in a finished form. On the other hand, other items that are more commonly found in large Silla tombs such as cauldrons, trays, tripod vessels, clothes irons, lidded bowls, and bowls appear to be locally-produced ritual vessels that emulate Goguryeo-style vessels. The lidded bronze bowl of Houchong gained much attention for the sixteen-character inscription found near the foot. The cast inscription reads “乙卯年國岡上廣開土地好太王壺杅十,” which can be interpreted to mean the “tenth dish cast in honor of Gukgangsang Gwanggaeto Jiho-taewang in the year of Eulmyo (415).” “Gukgangsang Gwanggaeto Jiho-taewang” is the posthumous

Fig 65 Lidded bronze bowl of Houchong, Gyeongju

title given to King Gwanggaeto of Goguryeo. Notably, the inscription is identical in script style to the inscription on the Gwanggaeto stele.

Meanwhile, the lidded silver bowl discovered in Seobongchong has a chased inscription—"延壽元年太歲在卯三月中太王敎造合杅用三 斤六兩"—consisting of twenty-two characters on the back side of the lid that explain that it was made in the third month of the year of Myo, the first year of the Yeonsu reign, on the order from the king (Taewang), using three geun and six ryang (one geun, being about 600 g, corresponds to sixteen ryang) of silver. The bottom of the bowl also bears an inscription stating that this bowl was made on the order of the king in the third month of the year of Sinyu, the first year of the Yeonsu reign, using three geun [of silver]—"延壽元年太歲在辛三月□太王敎造合杅三斤 (□ stands for the illegible character)." This silver bowl is widely believed to be of Goguryeo origin for the cross-shaped knob on its lid and because neither the era name "Yeonsu" nor the title "Taewang" was ever used in Silla. The year of production is presumed to be 451. In other words, this was the year of Sinmyo, based on the characters "sin" and "myo" appearing in the two respective inscriptions.

Goguryeo items are also found among jewelry and accessories from Silla tombs. For example, the earrings with thick main loops from the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong have gourd-shaped pendants, a detail that is highly unusual for Silla earrings. They are strongly reminiscent of the earrings from

Fig 66 Silver bowl of Seobongchong, Gyeongju

Fig 67 Inscription on the surface of the silver bowl of Seobongchong, Gyeongju





Fig 68 Gold earrings from the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Fig 69 Lead-glazed jar from Wolseong-ro tomb No. Ga-5, Gyeongju

tomb No. 1 of Maxiangou, Jian, within the former Goguryeo territory and are likely to have been brought from this area. The Y-shaped hair ornament unearthed in the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong is also virtually identical in appearance to a hair ornament found in the Maxiangou tomb. Otherwise, there are numerous other jewelry items and accessories found in Silla tombs that bear a striking resemblance to Goguryeo items, even if they cannot be said to originate from Goguryeo with any certainty. A lead-glazed jar from Wolseong-ro tomb No. Ga-5 is also highly likely to have been made in Goguryeo, but no definite confirmation is possible as similar items have not been yet found at any Goguryeo archaeological sites. The influence of Goguryeo can be also felt tangibly in many of the weapons and horse fittings items discovered in Silla tombs.

The question that arises, then, is why the stylistic elements of Goguryeo are so pervasively present in Silla's culture of the stone-covered wooden chamber period. The most probable cause of this phenomenon is the amicable relationship Silla maintained with Goguryeo from the late fourth century. Following Goguryeo's southern campaign in 400, the two countries became closer allies, and this relationship continued through to the mid-fifth century. During this period, large amounts of Goguryeo handicrafts must have flowed into the Gyeongju area, and items that are inspired by and modeled after Goguryeo items must also have been actively produced.

Given the friendly nature of the relationship between the two ancient states at that time, it was only natural that Goguryeo goods were brought into Silla. However, to this date no Silla goods from the stone-covered wooden chamber tomb period have ever been discovered at Goguryeo archaeological sites. This is a phenomenon comparable to how goods of Baekje or Silla origin have never been recovered from Chinese archaeological sites of the Southern and Northern Dynasty period.

Silla and Baekje often competed with each other for supremacy over the central and southern Korean peninsula, but cooperated with each other at other times to stop Goguryeo's southward progress. The two countries sent engineers and craftsmen to each other, and members of their royal families intermarried as a way of strengthening their political union. Obviously, such exchange must have entailed also the exchange of goods between the two countries. As a matter of fact, Baekje artifacts have been regularly discovered at Silla archaeological sites, and Silla artifacts have been unearthed from Baekje archaeological sites.





The gilt-bronze footwear of Singnichong are made by joining three thin copper sheets that are thickly plated in gold. A gilt-bronze lateral plate is placed on either side of the footwear, as well as on the soles. The surface of the soles are covered with a tortoise-shell pattern and features eleven eight-petaled lotus blossoms. A goblin's face and a pair of birds are alternately shown inside the middle row of hexagonal cells, and motifs such as birds including a bird with a human head, girin, and winged fish are placed in cells on either side. There has been much debate about the location of production of this pair of footwear. However, in terms of surface design, they are highly reminiscent of the footwear found inside stone burial chamber 4 of Bongdeok-ri tomb No. 1 in Gochang, a Baekje tomb dating from the later part of the Hanseong period. Details such as the lateral panels

Fig 70 Gilt-bronze footwear of Singnichong, Gyeongju (soles)

Fig 71 Silver openwork plates from former Songsan-ri tomb No. 1, Gongju

Fig 72 Swords with a pommel decorated with three leaves from Jisan-dong tomb No. 45, Goryeong (of Silla origin)

being joined at the toe and heel sections of the footwear and fastened using nails, and the spiky soles with metal nails sticking out from the inside are also features typically associated with footwear produced in Baekje.

Furthermore, two ornamental metal plates discovered in a tomb in Songsan-ri, Gongju (formerly Songsan-ri tomb No. 1), are belt decorations that are distinctively associated with Silla. They are square silver plates with a simple honeysuckle design in openwork. These two items strongly resemble belt ornaments recovered from Geumgwanchong. This tomb yielded two sets of similar decorative plates, with one made in gold and the other in silver. The decorative belt plates of Songsan-ri are therefore likely to have been brought from Silla. Although one may never know how exactly these items ended in a Baekje tomb, this must have occurred as a result of the Silla-Baekje coalition that was in place from 430 to 553.

Silla had a closer relationship to Gaya, its neighbor on the opposite side the Nakdonggang River, than any other ancient state on the Korean peninsula. However, it is difficult to describe their relationship in the usual language of diplomatic ties, as Gaya comprised several independent polities. Nevertheless, Silla and Gaya had a highly similar culture, and such cultural similarity went back to the Jinhan-Byeonhan period. After the fourth century, under the influence of the changing political landscape in the





Korean peninsula, Gaya became an ally of Baekje and Wa of the Japanese archipelago, to which Silla responded by forming a coalition with Goguryeo. The military tension between these two coalitions eventually escalated into a war in 400. Goguryeo and Silla delivered a huge defeat to the coalition forces of Gaya, Baekje, and Wa. However, in the 430s Silla was discontent about its overbearing ally and sought to mend its relationship with Baekje as part of an attempt to distance itself from the former. This also repaired the relationship between Silla and Gaya, and a period of peace ensued. The restoration of peace in the relationship between Silla and Gaya is well evidenced by their respective goods found in tombs of the other culture.

One of the most notable items of Gaya origin discovered in Silla tombs is the Daegaya-style sword. Swords that were made using the same method as Daegaya swords with dragon and phoenix designs have been discovered in Singnichong and Houchong. The sword from Singnichong, in particular, is strikingly similar to the dragon and phoenix sword from Okjeon tomb M3 in Hapcheon. The swords from Singnichong and Houchong are therefore presumed to have been brought from Daegaya. The exact circumstances under which they were taken to Silla is, however, not known, as no related written records exist. Singnichong is believed to be a companion tomb to Bonghwangdae, as is supposed for Geumnyeongchong. Meanwhile, the artifacts from it are items of highest grade and many of them are conjectured to have been brought from the southern Chinese dynasties or Baekje. The occupant of this tomb could be a member of the royal family who was involved in trade with Daegaya, Baekje and the southern Chinese dynasties. Silla was a more powerful state than Daegaya at that time, and so the sword was probably offered as a tribute by an individual of Daegaya to the occupant of this tomb. At the same time, it is equally possible that the sword was personally imported from Daegaya by the occupant of Singnichong.

Silla goods have also been discovered in Daegaya tombs. Among the examples of items that were directly imported from Silla, in a finished form, is the sword with the pommel decorated with three leaves from Jisan-dong tomb No. 45. However, swords with a pommel that has three leaves in openwork are found across all states that existed in the Korean peninsula at that time. Therefore, this alone cannot prove the existence of trade and exchange between Silla and Daegaya. At the same time, Silla swords with the three-leaf designs often have a distinctively shaped pommel that is arched at the top and square at the bottom. This is also the case with

Fig 73 Stone bracelet from Wolseong-ro tomb No. Ga-29, Gyeongju

the sword from the Jisan-dong tomb, which demonstrates similarities to Silla swords in terms of the method of production, an indication that it may have been produced in Gyeongju. Moreover, some of the earrings that were discovered in the Okjeon tumulus group in Hapcheon exhibit the characteristics of Silla earrings. However, these earrings also show subtle differences from Silla earrings, and could be Silla-style items that were produced in Daegaya. Finally, concerning Silla-style pottery from the Jisan-dong tumulus group and Okjeon tumulus group, there is a greater likelihood that they were produced in places lying east of the Nakdonggang such as Hyeonpung and Changnyeong, than in Gyeongju.

There is only archaeological evidence concerning trade and exchange between Silla and Japan. This is probably because the period of hostilities between the two countries that fought each other in the war of 400 was considerably longer than that of peace. Among the rare Japanese items recovered at Silla archaeological sites of this period are the stone bangle bracelets of Wolseong-ro tomb Ga-29 and Haji-style pottery of Wolseong-ro tomb Ga-31. Both tombs date back to circa the fourth century. Moreover, the bronze mirror of the type known as the 'mirror with nebular design' that was discovered in Geumnyeongchong could also be of Japanese origin, as





Fig 74 Hajiki-style pottery discovered in Wolseong-ro tomb No. Ga-31, Gyeongju

these kind of mirrors were popular in the Japanese archipelago at that time. In the early fifth century and in the sixth century and onward, Silla artifacts are found scattered across the Japanese archipelago. What this means is that there was a continuous and uninterrupted trade activity between people of these two countries. Trade and exchange activity appears to have been at its highest level after the 430s, when Silla at last decided to repair the relationship with Japan as part of a move to break free from Goguryeo's sway. The Three Yan or Silla-style horse fittings and jewelry and accessories that are found in mid-fifth century Japanese tombs are convincing pieces of evidence pointing to the trade activity between the two countries in this time period.

Silla's reputation as the "Golden Kingdom" is amply justified by artifacts contained in its tombs, which include an impressive array of gold jewelry and accessories. A number of gold jewelry and accessories have drawn attention for their unusual design or method of production. A bracelet with inset gemstones from the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong and an ornate dagger from Gyerim-ro tomb No. 14 are two such examples.

The bracelet with inset gemstones, the most eye-catching of all bracelets found in the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, was discovered lying near the left arm of the body of the deceased. Three Kingdoms-period bracelets, including those of Silla, are mostly thin bangles that are round or square in cross-section. This particular bracelet, however, is made of a wide gold sheet strip and its surface is covered with incised lines and gold granules and has inset turquoise and other gemstones. The bangle is made by joining together two gold sheet strips. In other words, the outer side of the bangle is

decorated with granules and gemstones, and is lined by another gold sheet whose top and bottom edges are rolled outward in a manner to form a top and bottom rim. Bracelets of this kind have never been encountered in any other countries in East Asia. This bracelet is quite similar to Persian bracelets, although it differs from them in the shape of the cross-section. According to some, this bracelet would have been made in the Eastern Roman Empire. However, similar bracelets have never been discovered in Central Asia or in areas further west. On the other hand, the fluttering crown ornament of Xihezi in Inner Mongolia shows substantial similarities with this bracelet in terms of the types of gemstones used and the method of inset, as well as in the use of thread wound into a hollow ball. This suggests the possibility that a Central Asian artisan or an artisan from further west who resided in the Northern Wei was involved in the making of the north tomb bracelet.

An ornamental dagger from Gyerim-ro is also a highly original piece which is also the singular example of its kind that has been discovered in East Asia. The iron dagger has a gold sheath and hilt. The gold sheath is inset with dark red garnets and is sumptuously decorated with gold granules all along the edges and in the middle. The long, slim hilt ends with a crescent shape. The locket of the sheath consists of a rectangular section and a socle-like section above it. The rest of the sheath is shaped like a long trapezoid with a wide flat tip. Two hooks for attaching the sword to the

Fig 75 Bracelet with inset gemstones from the north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju





belt are present on one side. The top hook is shaped like the letter P, and the bottom one has a hemispherical form. A dagger with a highly similar design is in the collection of the Hermitage Museum in Russia. This dagger, discovered in Borovoye in Kazakhstan, is estimated to date from the fifth century. The ornate dagger of Gyerim-ro is thought to have been made in Iran or in Central Asia.

Fig 76 Ornate dagger of Gyerim-ro tomb No. 14, Gyeongju

Of the glass goods discovered inside stone-covered wooden chamber tombs of Silla, all dishes and cups and items with inlaid designs are of non-local origin. Of particular note is the glass bead with inlaid design which was recovered inside tomb No. 4 of Locality C of the Michu royal tumulus group. A feat of craftsmanship, this small glass bead is inlaid with a series of tiny images. The blue glass bead has mosaic images of the faces of four individuals with a pale complexions and red lips, and is dotted with motifs such as birds and clouds that are positioned in between the four human faces. While most scholars trace this glass bead to Central Asia or Europe, according to some the item would have been made in the island of Java in Indonesia.

As for glassware, a total of twenty-four items have thus far been discovered in tombs in the Gyeongju area. Except for tomb No. 4 of Angye-ri, located at the outskirts of Gyeongju, all other tombs containing glassware are those of royals in which they were found together with gold crowns and other gold artifacts. In other words, glass objects were highly-prized items in Silla, and they were therefore interred only in tombs of kings and royal kinsmen. These glass items were made of soda glass blown using a blow tube. Most of them appear to have been made in places in which roman glass was produced. Concretely, they are conjectured to have been made somewhere in Syria or Palestine. Based on the pattern of distribution of similar glass vessels, these items are thought to have been brought to Silla via the steppe route, the portion of the Silk Road that ran through the Central Asian steppes.

Exotic and non-local goods found at Silla sites of the Maripgan period include those from Goguryeo, Baekje, Gaya, and the southern Chinese dynasties as well as Central Asia and regions lying further west of it. Among these, those that were made in Central Asia and the Middle East could have been brought to Silla by way of Goguryeo or Baekje. Meanwhile, Silla goods have been discovered at archaeological sites of Baekje, Gaya, and Wa and such occurrences at Goguryeo sites or sites of the southern Chinese dynasties have not been recorded. In Silla, the king and the royal family appear to have had a monopoly over exotic and non-local imported goods. They were sometimes given by the king to royal kinsmen and Gyeongju-based aristocrats, but instances of non-local goods given to local chiefs have not been identified. In borderland towns such as Changnyeong, artifacts from nearby Daegaya have been occasionally discovered.





Fig 77 Necklace with the inlaid glass bead from the Michu royal tumulus group (glass bead with inlaid design)

Fig 78 Glass cup of Cheonmachong, Gyeongju

Fig 79 Glass ewer from the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong, Gyeongju

Chapter 3

# Embracing Foreign Cultures and Institutions

## The Middle Ancient Period

Epigraphic Records
Tombs and Burial Customs
Buddhist Art
Clothing and Jewelry
Production of Agricultural Artifacts and General Artifacts
Trade and Exchange





The Middle Ancient period refers to the period between 514, the year of the coronation of Beopheung, the 2 third ruler of Silla, and 654 when Queen Jindeok, the 2 eighth ruler, died and King Muyeol ascended to the throne. This one hundred-forty year period is regarded as the most remarkable phase in Silla's history because progress measured in leaps and bounds were made across all aspects of its society. Not only did Silla completely shed any remaining characteristics of a confederation to become a ancient nation- state, it also developed its own uniquely distinctive traits during this period. The Middle Ancient period is, in other words, a period during which Silla, the last to develop into an ancient nation-state, finally caught up with Goguryeo and Baekje in terms of political and social development and went even further to acquire the strength necessary to later conquer and absorb the latter. The social and economic development that took place in this period was also accompanied by impressive advances in cultural areas. This assessment is confirmed not only by written records bearing witness to the accelerated growth of Silla during the period, but also by epigraphic records from the sixth century that have been recently discovered, as well as an abundant archaeological record.

King Jijeung (r. 500-514) who ruled over Silla in the early sixth century undertook noteworthy reforms in many areas. These reforms were critical steps necessary for building a powerful monarchy and enabling a centralized rule instead of the system of dominion through six bu that had previously split power.

King Beopheung (r. 514-540) succeeded Jijeung and took the reforms his father instituted to the next level through the introduction of concrete and practical changes in Silla's monarchy. In 517, a military affairs division—Silla's first government institution—was established. This was in response to the increasing need to strengthen military forces. In 520, a series of statutes were proclaimed to lay out basic directions in the way Silla was to be ruled. These statutes are presumed to have stipulated essential details of the government structure, including the creation of seventeen ranks of officials. Two laws, *Jeonsabeop*, related to arable lands and houses, and *Noinbeop*, pertaining to the slave class, are mentioned in recently-discovered epigraphic records and are some of the concrete evidence of the legislative activity during Beopheung's reign. In 528, Buddhism was proclaimed as the official religion. It was transmitted to Silla in the early fifth century at approximately the time of King Nulji's reign. Buddhism was not

initially embraced by all members of the ruling elite, and there was a period of tension and strife that surrounded the new religion. For instance, during King Beopheung's reign, Silla aristocrats were sharply divided on the project to build Heungnyunsa, the first Buddhist temple. Ultimately, the camp led by the king that supported the project prevailed, and Buddhism became the state religion of Silla at last.

The promulgation of Buddhism as a state religion was a major event that harbingered profound changes at all levels of Silla society. For one, the centralized rule that had been taking shape in terms of institutional infrastructure was now provided with a new set of ideological justifications. Meanwhile, as Buddhism also influenced the way people in Silla viewed death and life after death, substantial changes in burial architecture (i.e. the stone burial chamber with a side entrance) and the location of tombs (on mountains and hills at the outskirts of a city or town) endued. Furthermore, Buddhism sharply increased the level of literacy. Finally, along with Buddhism came various imported cultural elements. In sum, Silla's culture was radically and thoroughly transformed. In 536, an era name was used for the first time, and the king was now referred to by the title "Daewang" instead of "Maegeumwang." Silla's transformation into a centralized monarchy with an influential aristocratic class was now complete.

Once the system of government was fully in place, Silla set out to extend its territory. When In 551, King Jinheung (r. 540-576) reached adulthood and started to rule personally, he adopted the era name *Gaeguk*, which literally means "founding of the country," and declared the inauguration of a new age. During the same year, Silla partnered with Baekje to gain the control of the Hangang River valley. Two years later, in 553, this area was brought under the sole control of Silla. In 554, Silla defeated Baekje forces in a war of retaliation waged by King Seong. In 562, Silla achieved a long-standing goal by conquering the entirety of Gaya. This streak of war victories brought Silla new human and physical infrastructure and resources. It was also provided with a direct route to trade with China. The territorial expansion and accompanying increase in population and territory made it necessary to strengthen the rule of its provinces. For the integration of conquered peoples into Silla society, King Jinheung declared that all territories and their inhabitants were equal insofar as they were the king's territories and people, and through the proclamation committed himself personally to treating them thus.





King Jinpyeong (r. 579-632) who succeeded to King Jinji (r. 576-579) after the latter's short reign of three years took measures to maintain as well as develop the governing system put into place under the laws of Beopheung and Jinheung. Silla also embraced various advanced practices from the northern and southern Chinese dynasties with which it directly exchanged, all the while preserving governance systems rooted in native traditions and usages. Foreign institutional elements were integrated into existing state mechanisms by making appropriate changes, and the result was a society that was governed by the rule of law. All this laid a solid foundation for the unification of the Korean peninsula by Silla in the subsequent era. The last part of the Middle Ancient period was marked by reigns of female monarchs and was also the transition period toward the Middle period.

# 1 Epigraphic Records

## The sixth Century, the Age of Epigraphs

From the early sixth century, accelerated institutional reforms took place in Silla that propelled it further toward the institutionalization of a centralized monarchy. The establishment of various divisions of the royal government and a personnel system was coupled with the enactment of statutes of various kinds that stipulated the ruling principles of the kingdom. Written records fall short of providing related details, but they do offer general ideas about the creation and expansion of state systems in this period. The epigraphic content of the various stone monuments from this period goes some way to filling this vacuum of information. Although far from comprehensive, the epigraphic text from stone stelae offer some concrete clues.

It would hardly be an exaggeration to call the sixth century the age of epigraphs, given the impressive number of stone monuments with carved text dating from this period that are found across Silla's territory. Another important source of information regarding this period is mokgan, the wooden writing tablets that have been discovered in increasing quantities. However, mokgan often provide fragmented information and pale in comparison to epigraphic records, which can offer a much more vivid picture of the expanding state infrastructure of this period. In the early





Fig 1 Jungseong-ri stele, Pohang

Fig 2 Naengsu-ri stele, Pohang

sixth century, several stone stelae carved with texts that are close in nature to statutes were erected. The Silla stele of Jungseong-ri in Pohang (501), Naengsu-ri in Pohang (503), and Bongpyeong in Uljin (524) are some examples.

Among these three, the Jungseong-ri <Fig 1> stele is the oldest. It is 105.6 cm in height and bears an inscription consisting of twelve vertical rows and about two hundred-three total characters of uneven size. The smallest characters are 2 cm in height, and the largest is 5 cm in width. Like other epigraphic texts from the sixth century, the text on this stele is written in regular script, but some portions of it appear to have been written in seal script. The text relates how a conflict occurred between the six bu in which even local potentates became involved, and how the royal government had to step in to end the conflict. Toward the end of the text, it is stated that the parties that defied the adjudicatory decisions would face severe punishment. This statement hints at the increasingly urgent need for written laws in the form of statutes, at a time when they were yet to be established in Silla.

The Naengsu-ri stele <Fig 2> is 70 cm in width and is a rather unusual stele with inscriptions found on three sides: the front, back, and top. Two hundred thirty-one total characters are carved on its three surfaces, including one hundred twenty-five characters in twelve rows on the front. Based on the sexagenary year Gyemi, which is found at the beginning of the third row, the stone stele is presumed to have been erected in 503. It is a ruling of some sort in a case involving an individual named Jeolgeori, a dignitary of Jinimachon village—which is believed to be in the general area where the stele was found. Jeolgeori was embroiled in a dispute over his assets with some people in his entourage and the argument was mediated by the royal government. This stele provided several pieces of previously unknown information about the political environment of Silla at that time, and also revealed that King Jijeung held the honorary title of King Galumun before he became the ruler of Silla. King Galumun is a title that was given to princes who were out of the contention for the crown.

The Bongpyeong-ri stele <Fig 3> stands 204 cm and is irregularly shaped. The carved surface measures 32-36 cm in width and the bottom is 54.5 cm. The text is written in a transitional style between seal and regular scripts and contains three hundred eight (or three hundred nine) characters in ten vertical rows. This stele dates to 524 and has to do with armed rebellions that occurred a year earlier in various places across this



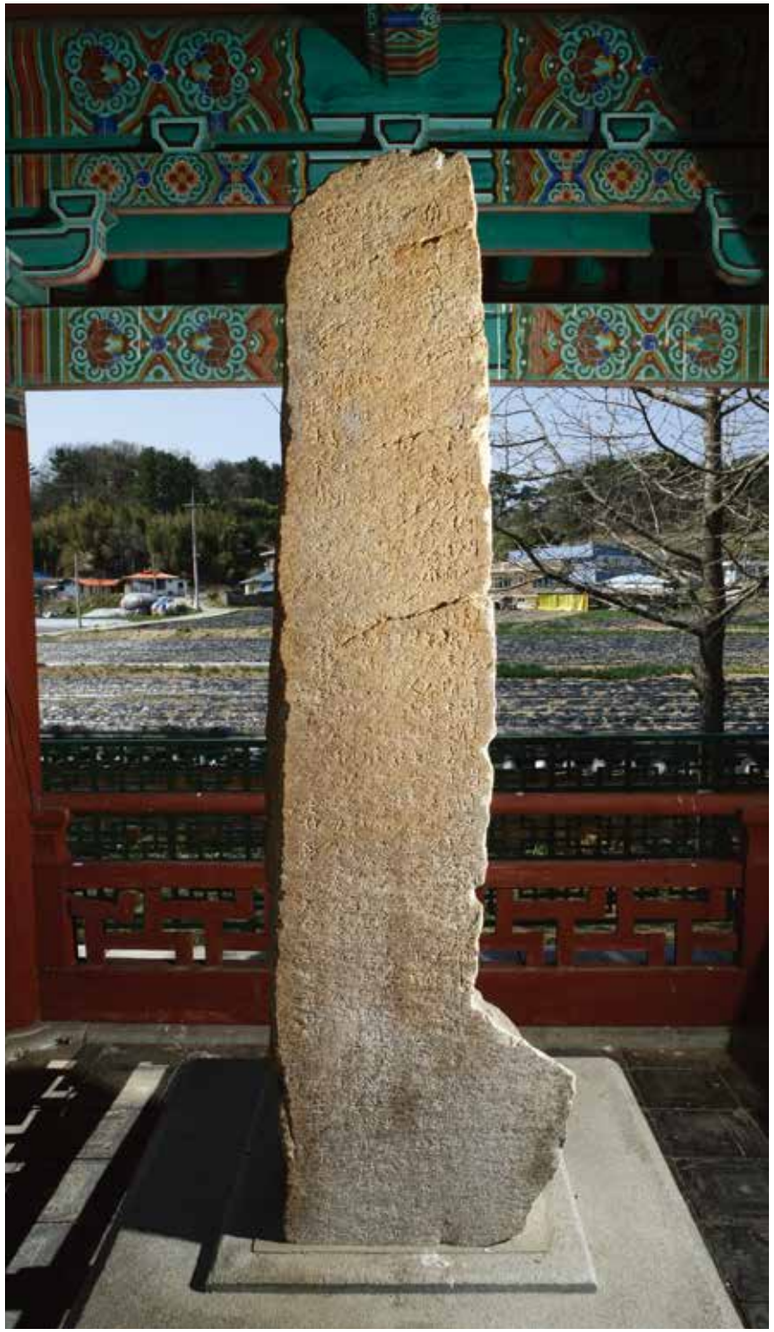


Fig 3 Bongpyeong-ri Silla stele, Uljin

area, probably by groups that were disgruntled by certain decisions taken by the central government. The central government dispatched many troops there to subdue the rebels. The epigraph relates what occurred in a meeting between the king and fourteen Gyeongju-based aristocrats after the conclusion of this event, and the various positions taken by the attendants. At the time of its discovery, the stele focused attention on the epigraphic text that contained a wealth of new information, including the names of various laws.

Interestingly, all of the stelae were found in the eastern coastal area. This region is an area through which people and cultures arrived in Silla from the northern Korean peninsula, and it was considered important from ancient times. Starting in the mid-fifth century, this area also served as the corridor in Goguryeo's southward advance in its attempt at territorial expansion. Silla subsequently sought to gain new northern territories, and military clashes started to occur between the two kingdoms in this precise area. The Bongpyeong stele of Uljin, erected in 524, is a reflection of this geopolitical situation.

Fig 4 Silla Jeokseong stele, Danyang





There is also a group of stelae that are related to Silla's territorial expansion in the mid-sixth century, most of which are victory monuments of some sort. One example is the Jeokseong stele of Danyang <Fig 4>, located in the upper reaches of the Namhangang River. This stone stele is 93 cm in height and has a damaged top. Only the front side of the stele was polished and carved. The epigraph is in regular script. The text is presumed to have originally been made up of four hundred thirty characters in twenty-two rows, but currently only about two hundred eighty-eight characters remain, with each character measuring close to 2 cm in height and width. Although a piece of stone was broken off at the section corresponding to the beginning of the first row (which normally contains date information), the stone monument is estimated to have been constructed in 545-551. The inscription offers new details about Silla's conquest of the lower Hangang River valley, an event known through written records. The stele inscription relates an event that occurred prior to the latter in which Silla forces led by General Isabu launched an attack on the Goguryeo fortress, Jeokseong, on the order of King Jinheung, successfully gaining control of it. This victory monument also offers rare insights into the system of titles and ranks in Silla's government as well as into the stage reached in the development of a legal system based on written laws.

The King Jinheung Stele of Changnyeong <Fig 5> was erected in 561. The stele stands close to 176 cm and measures 175 cm in width. The stele is a large unhewn rock, and the inscription is on the polished front side, framed by a rectangular groove. The characters are written in a regular script which still retains some elements of seal script. The text is in twenty-seven rows, each of which contains twenty-six characters. The first half of the text describes the rule of King Jinheung since his accession to the throne as a young child, including the territorial expansion occurred during his reign and the administration of conquered peoples, followed by the statement of reasons for his visit to the Changnyeong area. The latter half mainly consists of the list of names of Gyeongju-based aristocrats who accompanied the king on his visit, local officials who traveled there from their provinces to meet him, as well as military officials and local dignitaries such as village chieftains of the Changnyeong area. This stele has been long considered a conquest monument. But, given that Changnyeong was absorbed by Silla no later than the early fifth century, such conjecture cannot hold. If we consider the fact that Daegaya and other polities of Gaya were brought

Fig 5 King Jinheung stele, Changyeong

under Silla's control during the following year, it become clear that this monument is rather related to Silla's expansion into areas lying west of the Nakdonggang River.

Silla's expansion into the lower reaches of the Hangang is attested to by Jingheungwang Sunsubi stele <Fig 6>. This stele, originally on Bibong Peak of Bukhansan Mountain, was moved to the National Museum of Korea where it is currently located. This stele was identified as the stele of King Jinheung by Chusa Kim Jeong-hi during his first trip to Bibong Peak in 1816. Kim Jeong-hi later traveled to Bibong Peak for the second time, as is known by the carved note that he left on the lateral edge of the stele <Fig 7>.

The stele is made of granite. Recently, a rather surprising claim was made based on the analysis of the granite sample from of this stele, that the stele was made in Gyeongju and was later transported to Bibong Peak. The stele stands on a pedestal created on a natural rock mass at the summit of Bibong Peak, and the capstone with which the stele was originally mounted is missing. Hewn and polished on all four sides, the stele stands 155 cm in height and is carved with text only on the front side. The text is in regular script and consists





Fig 6 View of the restored King Jinheung Sunsu stele, Bukhansan Mountain

Fig 7 A rubbing the King Jinheung Sunsu stele, Bukhansan Mountain

of twelve rows, but it is mostly illegible due to severe defacement. Scholarly opinion is currently divided on the date of its construction. Some estimate it to be 555 and others, 568, with the latter view being more widely accepted. Either way, this stele is conclusive physical evidence of the northward progress by Silla to areas beyond the Hangang River. But the decision to erect such a conquest monument at the summit of a rugged mountain peak that is seldom accessed by people, with all the difficulties this implies, is rather intriguing. One possible explanation is that King Jinheung wanted to let the heavens know the territorial reach of his kingdom by erecting a conquest monument at an elevated site such as a mountain peak.

Meanwhile, two other stelae of King Jinheung located in Hwangchoryeong and Maunnyeong Passes are evidence of the northward progress in Silla's expansion campaign, this time via the eastern coastal region. The Hwangchoryeong stele, originally located at Hwangchoryeong Pass in Jangjin-gun, Hamgyeongnam-do, was relocated to the Hamheung Royal

Villa in Sapo-gu, Hamheung, where it is currently found. A section at the top of the stele, corresponding to the first line of the text, has been broken off. The original height is estimated at 151 cm, and the complete text is believed to contain thirty-five characters in twelve rows.

The Maunnyeong stele <Fig 8> was originally located at Maunnyeong Pass on Unsisan Mountain in Iwon-gun, Hamgyeongnam-do, and is currently on display at the Hamheung Royal Villa in Hamheung alongside the Hwangchoryeong stele. Like its counterpart, the Maunnyeong stele is made of granite. Measuring 136 cm in height, 45 cm in width, and 30 cm in depth, it has a complete capstone and was fashioned in a classical style. Unlike the Hwangchoryeong stele, this one has carved inscriptions both on the front and back sides. The front is carved with twenty-six characters in ten vertical rows, and the back twenty-five characters are in eight rows. The text consists of three parts dealing respectively with the visit by King Jinheung, the purpose of the visit, and the names of two monks and his retainers who accompanied him on the trip. According to the text, it was erected at the same time as the Hwangchoryeong stele in August 568, on the occasion of King Jinheung's tour of borderland regions. The king's

Fig 8 King Jingeung Sunsu stele, Maunnyeong, Hamheung

Fig 9 Namsan Mountain Fortress stele No. 1, Gyeongju





purpose was to see the new border with his own eyes and gain insight into the sentiment of people of conquered territories. The stele was, in sum, a symbolic edifice for reconciling conquered peoples to his rule and integrating them into Silla society.

There were numerous other stone stelae and petroglyphs from the Middle Ancient period bearing inscriptions of various different sorts. For instance, stelae were erected upon the construction of a new Fortress. The Myeonghwal Mountain Fortress stele (551) and Namsan Mountain Fortress stelae (591) <Fig 9> are two examples. Ten stelae related to the construction of Namsan Mountain Fortress were discovered from 1934 to 2000. These stelae provide not just facts surrounding the construction of Namsan Mountain Fortress, but also important details related to how local provinces of Silla were ruled. Most of these stelae list the names, ranks, and places of origin of those who were involved in the construction of the Fortress, preceded by the following statement: "The builders agree that Namsan Mountain Fortress shall be constructed in the year of Sinhae in accordance with the law, and they shall be punished should the fortress collapse within three years from its construction." The list of names varies from stele to stele, suggesting that different groups were responsible for different sections of the fortress.

As for stelae related to Buddhism, the Daegu Reservoir Stele with the year inscription of Musul (578) is the case in point <Fig 10>. The inscription lists the names and ranks of people who took part in the construction of a water reservoir in Mudong-ri Village, along with details such as the size of reservoir, total number of workers enlisted and the duration of construction work. A Buddhist monk is listed as the supervisor of the construction project instead of a local official. Buddhist monks of this period were often talented engineers and builders who contributed their knowledge and skills for national projects and played a role in various aspects of state affairs. Names of Buddhist monks are mentioned also in the epigraph of the Cheonjeon-ri Petroglyph of Ulju (535), as well as on the Hwangchoryeong and Maunnyeong Stelae. In the case of the Maunnyeong Stele, the names of two monks are mentioned before the names of the retainers who accompanied the king. The Cheongje Stele of Yeongcheon with the year inscription of Byeongjin (536) is another reservoir stele.

The Cheonjeon-ri Petroglyph of Ulju <Fig 12> is located on a rockface that measures close to 2.7 m in height and 9.5 m in width. It features

carved geometric designs, images of people and animals and scenes of processions, along with inscriptions. The inscriptions were added at various points in time from the Three Kingdoms period to late Silla. Names of Buddhist monks appear in the inscription dated Eulmyo, which is presumed to be 535. Names of Hwarang, members of Silla's elite youth corps, are also recorded here and there in this petroglyph. Names of Hwarang have been also identified in the Jeommal Petroglyph of Jecheon.

Examples of epigraphic records related to Confucianism include the Imsin Pledge Stele <Fig 11>. The stone stele earned this name after the sexagenary year name *Imsin* that was found at the beginning of the inscription, and for the frequent mentions of phrases related to the pledging of loyalty. In the absence of definite information as to the date of its construction, the stele is thought to have been erected in 612. Notably, the text contains a pledge to read *Shijing* [Classic of Poetry], *Shangshu* [Book of Documents], *Liji* [Book of Rites] and *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan* [Spring and Autumn Annals and Zuo Zhuan Concordance Table] within three years,

Fig 10 Stele with the inscription of the year Musul (578), Daegu

Fig 11 Imsin Pledge stele, Gyeongju





attesting to a fervent commitment to Confucian ethics among Silla youth of this period.

Confucianism-related information is also found in inscriptions on stelae from an earlier time such as the Bongpyeong, Hwangchoryeon, and Maunnyeong Stelae. In the inscription on the Bongpyeong Stele, we find the phrase 獲罪於 which means 'committing sins against the heavens." This phrase originally appears in the 'Bayi' chapter of *Lunyu* [Analects]. Therefore, Confucian classics appear to have been widely read in Silla already at that time. Meanwhile, such terms as *sun*su (巡狩) and *jim* (朕) that were used in the Hwangchoryeong and Maunnyeong Stelae bear witness to the stage of integration of Confucian concepts in the philosophy of government at the time of King Jinheung's rule. The phrase 修己以安百姓, from the Xian Wen chapter of *Lunyu*, also appears in Silla epigraphs of this period.

Fig 12 The Cheonjeon-ri petroglyph at Ulju

## Epigraphs of Unified Silla

Following the unification of the Three Kingdoms, Sinitic characters were used much more in Silla. As Buddhist and Confucian scriptures became widely available, this caused the number of people proficient in Sinitic characters to increase significantly, resulting also in sharp improvements in writing skills. The state, in need of officials versed in Sinitic characters, also offered literacy education. As a result, by the seventh century, knowledge of Chinese in Silla reached quite a high level. Linguistic geniuses such as Wonhyo and Gangsu also appeared, further raising the quality of Chinese in Silla's population. For example, during the eighth century, Tang treated Silla as a "nation of gentlemen" based on its level of literacy, which was judged to be equal to its own level.

Until then Sinitic characters were written only on stone or tablets made of organic materials. In other words, they were either carved on stone stelae or written on wood or bamboo tablets. With the beginning of paper production and as production techniques improved, administrative documents and books were written on paper. However, materials other than paper were still used. Carved inscriptions or ink characters were added to pottery. Characters were

Fig 13 Carved inscription epitaph plate from the holder of the three storey stone pagoda of Hwangboksa temple, Gyeongju





stamped on objects such as roof tiles and were engraved onto personal seals and dishes as well. Carved inscriptions are also widely found on sarira reliquary items, tablets recording information about pagodas, Buddhist statuary, and bronze temple bells.

Thus, the use of epigraphs continued unabated into the Unified Silla period. What is new in this period is that epigraphs were frequently placed on gilt bronze objects. Gilt bronze plates with carved inscriptions were placed inside a sarira holder and inscriptions were added to the surface of bronze bells. Inscriptions are also found on the surface of the a holder discovered inside the three-story stone pagoda of Hwangboksa Temple (706) <Fig 13>. Other examples include the gilt bronze tablet that records the chronology of a pagoda that was found at the former site of Changnimsa Temple (855), and the gong with the inscription "sixth year of *Hamtong*."

The King Seongdeok Bell (771) is the best known example of bronze bells with carved inscriptions. The Sangwonsa Temple Bell is another example. It was cast in 725, making it the oldest surviving bronze bell in Korea. Among the bells that were taken to Japan and were destroyed or are surviving and that bear cast inscriptions are the bells of Mujinsa (745) <Fig 14> and Yeonjisa (833). The iron Buddha of Borimsa Temple in Jangheung- gun, Jeonnam also

Fig 14 Rubbing of the inscription of the Mujinsa temple bell, Boryeong

Fig 15 Inscription on the back of the iron Buddha of the Dopiansa temple, Cheolwon

bears a cast inscription on the back side of Buddha's left arm. The cast inscription states at the very beginning that the Buddha statue was created 1808 years after Shakyamuni entered nirvana, and states that this corresponds to the third year of the current reign of King Heonan, hence 858. Furthermore, the iron Buddha of Dopiansa Temple in Gangwon (865) is a seated statue measuring 91 cm in height and has an inscription on its back written in regular script <Fig 15>. Other examples of bronze objects with epigraphs include a padlock discovered at Wolji (Anapji) that bears a carved inscription, *Donggungail* (東宮衙鎰), and a bronze plate discovered at the south annex parking lot of the Gyeongju National Museum that has the inscription, *Sinsimdonggungsetaek* (辛審東宮洗).

Stone epigraphs took on more varied forms than in the previous period. Stelae bearing epitaphs were first introduced in this period. At the tomb of King Muyeol, the stele itself has vanished but its hornless dragon-shaped pedestal with the inscription *Taejong Muyeol Daewang-ji Bi* 太宗武烈大王之碑 <Fig 17> remains in place. Other examples of carved epitaphs include the grave stelae of King Munmu and Kim In-mun. Meanwhile, only fragments have survived of the grave stelae of King Seongdeok and King Heungdeok. Other stone epigraphs are mostly found in Buddhist objects, many of which are from the Sninth century. The ninth century epigraphs exhibit distinctive characteristics that set them apart from those of the previous era. Among Buddhist stone works, there is an unusual type of stele that has a sculpture of a Buddha in bas-relief on the front or on all four sides and that also has carved inscriptions. Some of them are rectangular in shape like a regular stele and others are in the shape of a mandorla. The Amitabha with the year inscription Gyeyu (673) <Fig 18> falls into the former category, and the Amitabha with the year inscription Gichuk (689) in the latter category. The production of Buddhist sculpture-stelae, therefore, appears to coincide with the popularity of the Amitabha cult or Pure Land Buddhism. The next





Fig 16 Part of the inscription of the stele of the Taejong King Muyeol's Tomb

Fig 17 Rubbing of the inscription of the stele of the Taejong King Muyeol's Tomb

Fig 18 Amitabha Buddha stele with the inscription Gyeyu (673), Yeongi

Fig 19 Standing Amitabha statue of Gamsansa Temple, Gyeongju

examples are the standing Amitabha and the Maitreya of Gamsansa Temple (720) <Fig 19>. Both have the dates and circumstances of their creation inscribed on the back. The two texts, impressive for their well-crafted sentences, bear testimony to the high degree of proficiency in written Chinese in Silla of this period, a topic that will be discussed in further detail later in the section on Sino-Korean literature.

Memorial stelae for Buddhist monks (*hwasangbi*) first appeared in late Silla and formed a distinctive tradition that continued through to the early Goryeo period. The Seodang Stele is a memorial stele dedicated to the monk Wonhyo and is located in Goseonsa Temple. It is the only surviving record containing specific information about his death on March 30, 686 at the age of seventy. This stele was erected sometime during the reign of King Aejang (r. 800-808). It is also considered of great significance for the information it contains about Eumlihwajeong, one of ten local armies of Silla known as jeong. Meanwhile, the Nanghye Hwasang Stele <Fig 20> is a notable example of a ninth century stele related to a Zen Buddhist monk. This stele is located at the former grounds of Seongjusa Temple in Boryeong, Chungcheongnam-do. The epigraph is one of four epigraphs written by Choi Chi-on. The monk Nanghye is an eighth-generation descendant of King Muyeol. He was born in the first year of King Aejang's rule (800) and died in the second year of King Jinseong's rule (888) at the age of eighty-nine. The epigraph describing his study of Buddhism and service to the king as his advisor offers insights into many important areas of Silla society, including the so-called bone rank system (golpumje), which ranked members of the aristocracy according to the degree of kinship to the royal family. The epigraph is presumed to have been composed circa 890, and the stele was erected probably shortly thereafter. Other examples of stelae of this kind include the Bojo Seonsa of Borimsa Temple in Jangheung, the Jingyeong Daesa of Bongnimsa Temple in Changwon and the Jijeung Daesa of Bongamsa in Mungyeong. These stelae are evidence attesting to the influence of Zen Buddhism in late Silla.

Tapji are tablets that are inside a pagoda, and among these the Myogil Pagoda tablet of Haeinsa Temple <Fig 21> stands out. Carved on a brick, the epigraph is based on text composed by Choi Chi-won in 895. The text explains that the pagoda was constructed to comfort the souls of Buddhist monks who died during wars that raged in Silla around this time period. Others such as the pagoda tablet of Beopgwangsa Temple (846) and that of





Fig 20 Memorial stele for Nanghye, Seongjusa Temple site, Boryeong

Fig 21 Myogil pagoda tablet of Haeinsa Temple, Hapcheon

Fig 22 King Minae sarira holder of Donghwasa Temple, Daegu

Borimsa Temple (869) also deserve a mention.

Quite a few pagodite sarira holders bearing inscriptions have been discovered as well. While some of them date from the eighth century, the great majority are from the ninth century. The King Minae Sarira Holder of Donghwasa Temple <Fig 22> was discovered inside the three-story stone pagoda in the grounds of Biroam, a hermitage belonging to the temple. The three-story pagoda was built in 863 to comfort the soul of late King Minae who passed some twenty years earlier. Carved on the surface of this pagodite sarira holder that is painted black (8.3 cm in height) is the account of King Minae's life along with the purpose and circumstances of construction of the pagoda and a list of names and ranks of people involved in the project. The sarira holder is thus an important piece of evidence proving that Donghwasa Temple was patronized by Silla's royal family. The sarira jar with the date inscription of the second *Yeongtae* year (766) and the sarira jar with the date inscription of the sixth *Hamtong* year (865) are also noteworthy.

Other miscellaneous objects bearing carved inscriptions include the flagpole supports of Jungchosa Temple (827) and the stone lantern of Gaeseonsa Temple (868) in Damyang. An inscription is found also on the rock cliff Buddha of Bangeosan Mountain (801), located in Gunbuk-myeon, Haman. Meanwhile, in the Sindae-ri Fortress that was built in the





Fig 23 Potsherd with inscription from Sadang-dong kiln site, Seoul

early eighth century to defend Silla's capital from Japanese attack, there are stone blocks set at regular intervals that are carved with information such as the length of a given section of the wall and the names of towns from which people were mobilized for the construction work. The name *Geumgyeong* appearing in these inscriptions intrigued historians, most of whom believe that it was another name for Gyeongju. Among pottery, the vessel discovered at the kiln site in Sadang-dong, Seoul that bears the inscription "*hyeon gichon hajiwi* 縣器村何支爲" is the best known example <Fig 23>. *Gichon* is probably the name of a village in 'seventh county (*hyeon*)' where the kiln was located. This vessel indicates that there were specialized pottery-making villages in the seventh century and is considered invaluable.

# 2 Tombs and Burial Customs

## Tombs from the Mid-Sixth Century to Unified Silla

During the period beginning in the mid-sixth century to Unified Silla, the main types of burial architecture consisted of stone chamber tombs with a side entrance and cremation tombs. However, small stone chamber tombs were also built. The stone chamber tombs with a side entrance are aboveground burial architecture and were large, elevated mounds just like the tombs from the Maripgan period. The stone chamber from this period has retaining stone slabs along the inner walls as well as around the mound on the outside. Tombs of this type were constructed on mountains and hills that immediately surround the central section of Gyeongju starting in around the mid-sixth century.

Stone chamber tombs with a side entrance are tombs that are designed to allow for the addition of interments at a later time. They are, therefore, equipped with a covered corridor, known as *yeondo*, for easy access to the burial chamber from the outside. The *yeondo* is extended by another outdoor path known as the *myodo* <Fig 24-④>. The fourth and last element of the stone chamber tomb with a side entrance is the mound. The *myodo* was naturally filled with earth. It was customary not to use a separate coffin for burials in a stone chamber tomb with a side entrance. Instead, the body of the departed was laid on a raised platform. These platforms, highly varied in style <Fig 24>, can be also considered a defining element of the stone chamber tomb with a side entrance.





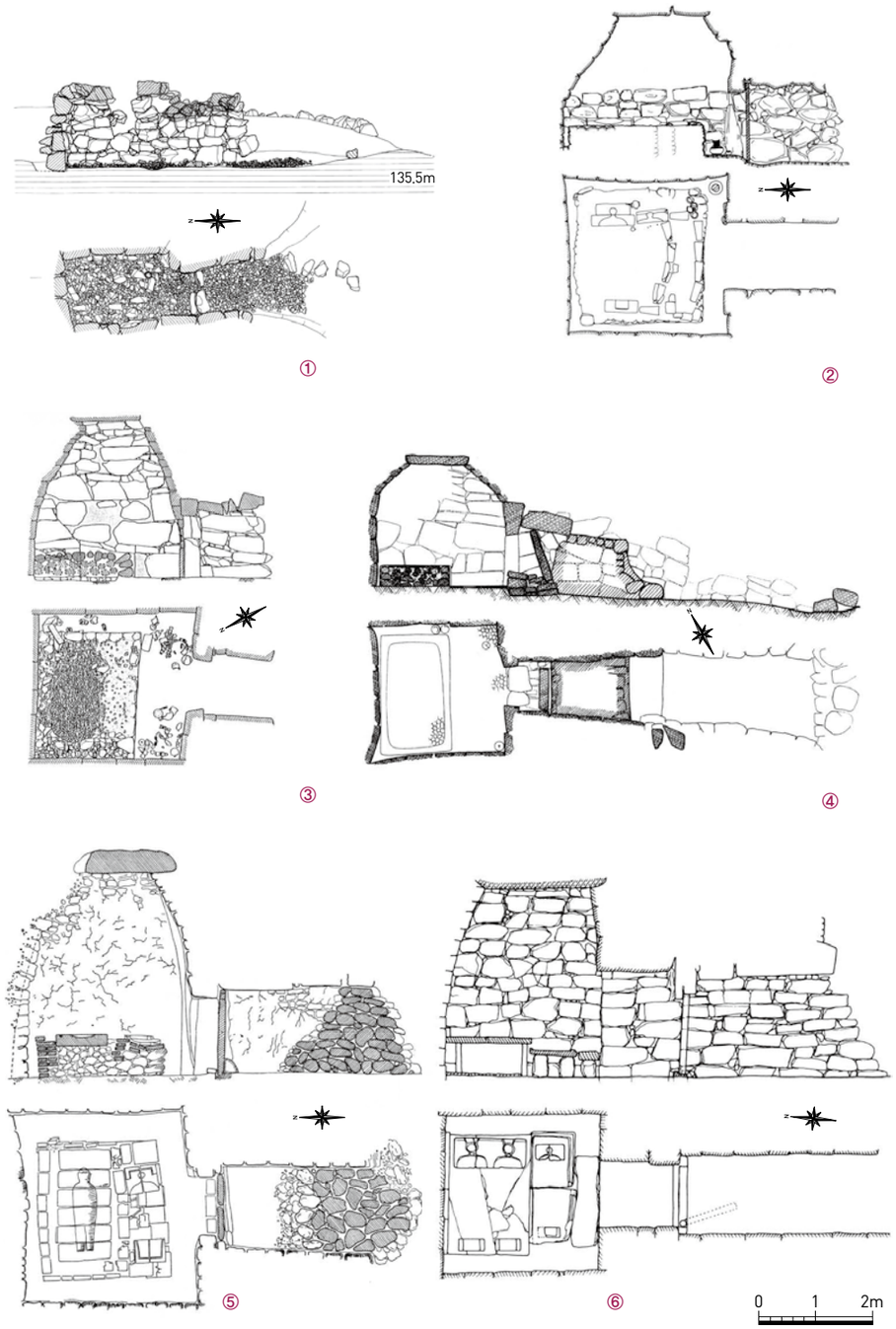



Fig 24 Gyeongju area stone chamber tombs with a side entrance; plan and cross-section

The stone chamber is often shaped like a small room with a high ceiling, and as such the ceiling was a simple stone block placed above the four walls that are built to taper toward the top. The walls tend to taper sharply from the level of the top ledge of the door opening to the *yeondo* corridor. As a result, the ceiling is lower in the corridor than in the burial chamber.

Stone chamber tombs with a side entrance are classified generally according to the plan of the burial chamber and the position of the corridor. The corridor may be in the middle or on the left or right side of the burial chamber. The burial chamber is either square or rectangular in plan. Available evidence suggests a strong likelihood that tombs with a rectangular burial chamber belong to an early period when the stone chamber tomb with a side entrance was first introduced. They were later replaced by tombs with a square burial chamber, but the exact time frame of this transition is not precisely known. Of the tombs with a square burial chamber, those dating from later eras tend to have higher ceilings. Also, some of the later tombs with a side entrance are equipped with an additional section of the passage way, known as bido, between the entrance and the *yeondo*.

One remarkable fact about the stone chamber tombs with a side entrance of Silla is the great variety of platforms inside the burial chamber. Platforms appear to have gained in height over time. The existence of these platforms suggests that the body of the deceased was not placed in a coffin. The most common type of burial platform is created by filling small rocks inside a rectangular frame made of crushed stone. A minority such as the platform of Touchong in Jangsan are built like a bed, using a large stone slab. Some of them were found with a head rest, chest rest and a foot rest, while others such as Ssangsangchong have a single large rest to support the whole body. These accessories for supporting the body of the deceased are usually made of tuff stone.

As for cremation tombs, there were two main types: graves in which the urn containing ashes is directly placed inside the pit and those graves in which the urn is nested inside a protective container or case. Most cremation tombs located outside the capital area belong to the first type, and graves of the second type are usually found in the capital area. The urn was often placed inside a stone casket, a lidded stone bowl or a pottery vessel, or inside a pit. Urns were either pottery vases that were lavishly decorated with stamped designs or ceramics of continental origins. From the eighth century, urns with loops for tying the lid to the body of the vessel <Fig 25> started to appear.

Evidence that allows us to guess the appearance of a cremation





Fig 25 Silla cremation urns excavated from the Gyeongju area

tomb was absent until the recent discovery of a tomb in Seokjang-dong, Gyeongju (tomb No. 61). Judging from remains recovered from this tomb, the existence of a mound is almost certain. This tomb <Fig 26> was built in a round pit dug into the ground that measures about 50 cm in depth and 200 cm in diameter. The bottom of the pit was covered with flagstones, and a square stone chamber was set up above it by stacking crushed stones and four flagstones in an interlocking manner. Some sections of the four walls of the stone chamber are wedged in by an additional stone mound. The pit was then completely filled with earth all the way to the brim. An urn with stamped design was first placed inside the stone chamber, a round stone wall was built around it in a manner to enclose it completely, and then a capstone appears to have been then placed above the structure. As a final step, retaining stone slabs that each measure about 20 cm in width and height were placed around the structure which extended 200 cm in the diameter of the cross-section. A small earthen mound was probably built inside the area surrounded by retaining stone slabs. Also, there could have been a stone altar in the rectangular-shaped area at the southeast edge of the mound that was enclosed by stone walls and filled with earth.

The cremation tomb of Dongcheon-dong was excavated by an archaeological team of the Gyeongju National Museum and was found at the foot of a stone chamber tomb with a side entrance, located on a knoll at the southern extremity of Sogeumgang Mountain in Gyeongju. This

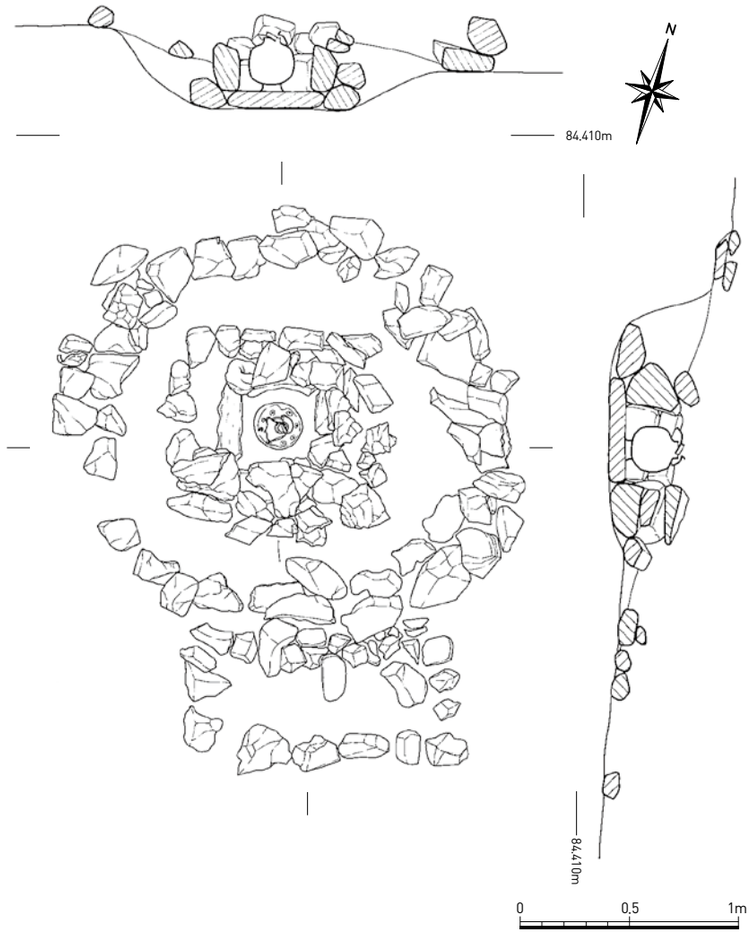



Fig 26 Cremation tomb of Seokjang-dong, Gyeongju

Fig 27 View of a cremation burial and cremation urn, Seokjang-dong, Gyeongju





cremation tomb is likely to have had an aboveground mound of a moderate height as it was from roughly the same time period as the stone chamber tomb. Inside the small stone encasement, a funeral urn was discovered along with a series of grave goods. This tomb is dated to sometime in the third quarter of the sixth century.

## Burial Customs of the Middle Ancient Period

Stone chamber tombs from this period are distinguished from closed pit-style tombs of the Maripgan period by the existence of an opening and a passageway that allowed access to the sepulchral space. The emergence of tombs of this type brought about unprecedented changes in the burial customs of Silla. First of all, they were now able to place the body of the deceased after the construction of the tomb was fully completed and also use the same tomb for additional burials. Moreover, people could perform funeral rites inside the burial chamber after laying the body of the deceased to rest there. Such change seems to have occurred under the influence of burial customs in neighboring Goguryeo and Baekje as well as the southern and northern continental dynasties. Given that stone burial chambers were constructed in large numbers beginning in the Middle Ancient period and not before, the southern and northern continental dynasties are likely to be the main sources of influence.

Unlike with tombs of the previous period, stone chamber tombs tend to contain only a comparatively small amount of grave goods. Grave good numbers became almost scanty, forming a stark contrast to the Maripgan period, when extravagant arrays of grave goods were buried with the dead. Daily necessities for use by the dead in the afterlife vanished from tombs in this period, and only clothes worn by the deceased and a few tributes placed near the head comprised the full extent of grave goods. On the other hand, items that were previously absent in tombs were offered in some of the tombs such as miniature replicas of everyday objects, human figures in terracotta (*doyong*), or the dragon from the twelve Earthly Branches, and other amulet-like objects. The use of a stone platform to lay out the body of the deceased is another major change introduced during this period. The interred person was directly laid out on the stone platform using various accessories to support and wedge the body, including head, chest, and foot rests.

Fig 28 Outer tomb passage (upper) and inner tomb passage (lower), Touchong, Gyeongju

A small number of offerings were placed near the head of the deceased, whose attire was usually completed with a belt and belt ornaments. Offerings are generally found grouped at the front side or corners of the stone platform. Offering items are mostly pottery vessels like goblets, long-necked jars, or vases that were used during the offering ritual that was performed.

The structure of the stone chamber tombs, the types of grave goods, and pattern of distribution thereof suggest that burials in the Middle Ancient period took place in the following order. The body of the deceased was transported to the tomb after its full completion and was introduced into the stone burial chamber by passing through the *myodo* and *yeondo*. Clothing accessories and offering items were then placed around the body of the dead on the stone platform. Next, more tributary goods were placed on a stone altar, and a ritual was performed to bid farewell to the departed. Finally, the *yeondo* and *myodo* were sealed and filled. When another body was added to the same tomb, they reopened the two passageways and set up a second platform inside the burial chamber, upon which they laid the body of the deceased. They then paid final respects to the deceased and re- sealed the corridors leading to the burial chamber in the same way as for the initial burial.

The complete burial process during the Middle Ancient period is likely to have taken place in the following order: selection of the burial site, preparation of grave goods, (observance of a ritual dedicated to an earth god (*huto*)), preparation of the ground, excavation of the grave pit, construction of the stone burial chamber, (*bangsangsi* (Ch.: *fangxiangshi*) rite), temporary placement of the funerary bier, transportation of the body of the deceased into the burial chamber, dressing of the body, offering of votive and tribute objects, placement of grave goods, *pyeongtoje*, the ritual held after filling the grave pit with earth, and sealing of the burial chamber. Furthermore, the discovery of artifacts that may be ritual objects near the burial mound or inside the ditch around it, the existence of a stone altar in front of it, along with the space for paying respects to the deceased—the latter in the case of large tombs containing remains of kings—suggest that rites took place outside the tomb even after the interment was completed.

The ritual held before the mourners exited the burial chamber in front of an altar loaded with tributes could be considered identical in nature to the traditional *pyeongtoje*. Moreover, greater importance seems to have been placed, during this period, on tributes offered during this rite than on tributes placed near the head of the dead, in contrast to the previous period. This change, along with the disappearance of everyday objects for use in the afterlife, is a reflection of the change in the conception of death and postmortem existence. While the tomb is still considered to be the dwelling of the dead, the life led by the dead inside was no longer believed to be the exact replica of life in the world of living. The afterlife probably became a concept of greater abstraction or symbolic existence in the minds of people of this period. *Myeonggi*, or miniature objects, replaced actual objects, and the dead person was now considered a spirit. Such change in burial customs occurred in China when the burial chamber, closer to an outer coffin, was replaced by a chamber proper—considered a radical revolution in continental burial architecture—providing room for holding rites in the tomb.

# 3 Buddhist Art

In 528, Buddhism was at last recognized as the state religion of Silla, nearly one hundred fifty years after it was first transmitted from Goguryeo. This event heralded a turning point in Silla's art as well as its overall culture, which underwent fundamental and radical shifts thereafter. The wave of change began with the construction of Buddhist temples in the royal capital. Construction of Heungnyunsa Temple, Silla's first ever Buddhist temple, was completed in 544, the fifth year of King Jinheung's rule (r. 540-576). This was followed by Hwangnyongsa Temple, Bunhwangsa Temple, and others that were patronized by the royal family. The exact locations are currently known for only about ten temples of the Middle Ancient period. Among these temples, Hwangnyongsa Temple was the largest in scale. The grounds of Hwangnyongsa Temple extended nearly 20,000 pyeong (about 70,000 $m^2$) in total area. In 553, the groundwork began, and in 584, central mail hall, housing a gigantic gilt bronze Shakyamuni triad, was completed. Judging from the thrones surviving at the site where central mail hall stood <Fig 29>, as many as nineteen Buddhist sculptures appear to have existed in the building, including a standing Shakyamuni Buddha. The standing Shakyamuni is estimated to have measured an impressive 5 m in height. This Buddha of massive proportions was counted among the three greatest treasures of Silla and was long revered by its people. The sculpture was of immeasurable significance for the history of Silla Buddhism but was



Fig 29 The location of central main hall in the former grounds of Hwangnyongsa Temple, Gyeongju

consumed by fire in 1238 during the Mongol invasion of Korea.

An eight year-long excavation project was carried out at the ancient site of Hwangnyongsa Temple site beginning in 1976 in the hope of finding clues that would allow the reconstruction of the appearance of this standing Buddha. Unfortunately, only forty-seven total pieces of Buddhist sculpture-related artifacts have been recovered from the site. Of these, only one is presumed to have been a fragment of the gigantic Buddha of central main hall. It is a fragment that appears to have been part of Buddha's hair with conch-shaped curls <Fig 30>. This dearth of material remains makes it difficult to guess the appearance of the standing Shakyamuni. Nevertheless, given that the fragment corresponding to just a few hair curls weigh as much as 6.2 kg, there is no doubt about the prodigious proportions of this Buddha.

The Hwangnyongsa Temple site, meanwhile, yielded a small but interesting standing Buddha. Recovered at a point lying east of where a

wooden pagoda once stood, this statue is a mere 17.5 cm high <Fig 31>. The Buddha has a slightly bent left leg, with the right hip jutting out to one side, in the so-called "tri-curve position." The thin silk robe hangs from the left shoulder, leaving the right shoulder bare, and a bead is held in the right hand. Fifteen similar Buddhas in a tri-curve posture, wearing a robe draped from the right shoulder and holding a bead have been discovered in Silla's former territory alone, including three found in the ruins of Suksusa Temple site in Yeongju. Given that no instance of these Buddhas of singular design has ever been encountered in Goguryeo or Baekje's former territories, they may very well be unique to Silla. As for the roof-end tile discovered near the seminar hall of Hwangnyongsa Temple site <Fig 32>, it measures as much as 182 cm in height. Since the size of roof-end decorations are proportionate to the size of the roof and the building, this provides some idea as to just how colossal the buildings could have been. These tiles were customarily placed at either end of a roof ridge and served as an amulet to ward off evil and harm at the same time as embellishing the appearance of a building. The back of this roof- end tile features the sculpted faces of a man and a woman. Although the depictions are rather coarse, the expressive faces are considered invaluable as sculptures that immortalize the faces of Silla people. The roof-end tile that depicts a human face that was discovered on the former grounds of Yeongmyosa Temple site <Fig 33> is another such item.

In 645, nearly sixty years after the completion of the main sanctuary, a wooden pagoda of nine storeys in height was built outside this building. The circumstances surrounding the construction of this gigantic pagoda, standing 80 m in height, is described in detail in *Samguk yusa*. According to this source, the idea was proposed by the monk Jajang. Queen Seondeok (r. 632-647) hired the Baekje builder Abiji who led a team of some two hundred builders in the construction of the pagoda. Like central mail hall, the pagoda was also consumed by fire in 1238 during the Mongol invasion <Fig 34>.

Bunhwangsa Temple, another early Buddhist temple of importance, also deserves attention. It was constructed in the third year of Queen Seondeok's reign (634). The temple notably has a stone brick pagoda that was built with andesite rocks hewn into the shape of bricks <Fig 35>, an unusual type of construction for architecture of this type. This pagoda is the oldest surviving Silla pagoda. Of the nine stories of which it originally consisted, only three remain at present. The pagoda was repaired and rebuilt multiple times over the centuries. It is, therefore, unclear how much of its current appearance





Fig 30 Fragment of Buddha's hair discovered at the Hwangnyongsa Temple site, Gyeongju

Fig 31 Standing Buddha discovered at the Hwangnyongsa Temple site, Gyeongju

Fig 32 Roof-end tile recovered at the Hwangnyongsa Temple site, Gyeongju

Fig 33 Roof-end tile representing a human face, formerly known as having been discovered at the Yeongmyosa Temple site, Gyeongju

Fig 34 Former site of the nine-story wooden pagoda of Hwangnyongsa Temple site, Gyeongju

retains original aspects. It is interesting to note how this pagoda is in a radically different style from the stone pagoda of the Baekje temple Mireuksa, constructed around the same time.

The stone brick pagoda of Bunhwangsa Temple has an entrance at each of its four sides at the first level. These entrances are flanked by Vajrapanies (K: *Geumgangyeoksa*) standing on either side <Fig 36>. The large head compared to the size of the body and the heavenly clothes are typical elements of early seventh century Vajrapanies sculpture. The third round of excavations of the Bunhwangsa Temple site in 1990-1992 revealed that behind the stone brick pagoda there were three sanctuaries, distributed in a manner to form a triangle. It was also discovered during this round of excavation that the current layout with the stone brick pagoda and Bogwangjeon Hall as the main edifices was created during the third reconstruction of the temple, although the exact date remains unknown.

During repairs performed in the colonial period, a stone casket was discovered between the second and third stories of the stone brick pagoda. The stone casket contained a sarira reliquary and ritual vessels. As the oldest surviving artifacts of their kind from Silla, the sarira reliquary and associated ritual vessels are considered of an inestimable value. Unfortunately, the exact circumstances of their discovery were not clearly documented. Also, some of the items that originally made up this set are currently missing. The complete





Fig 35 Stone brick pagoda of Bunhwangsa Temple, Gyeongju

Fig 36 Vajrapanies at the first story of the stone brick pagoda of Bunhwangsa Temple, Gyeongju

Fig 37 A sarira reliquary item discovered inside the stone brick pagoda of Bunhwangsa Temple, Gyeongju

Fig 38 A sarira reliquary item (needle case) discovered inside the stone brick pagoda of Bunhwangsa Temple, Gyeongju

list of items include a lidded silver bowl, shells from Okinawa Island, a silver needle case, gold and silver needles, silver earrings shaped like disks, a gilt bronze ornamental plate, and a series of glass and jade beads of various types. Most items are practical items used by women, suggesting that they are tributes related to Queen Seondeok <Figs 37 and 38>.

The crown jewel of Buddhist art of the Middle Ancient period is arguably the pensive Bodhisattva in a half lotus posture. The pensive Buddha represents a Bodhisattva seated on a round pedestal with the right foot resting on the left leg, known as the half lotus posture. The Bodhisattva appears lost in thought, with a finger of the right hand placed on the cheek. Quite a few such sculptures were produced in Silla during this period. The finest example of them is no doubt the one designated National Treasure No. 83 <Fig 39>. Creating a sculpture with gilt bronze is not an easy task. It is all the more challenging if the shape of the statue is complex such as the pensive Bodhisattva. This is one of the reasons why the flawless craftsmanship and perfect visual balance displayed by National Treasure No. 83 are so impressive. Along with sculptures of the Seokguram Grotto, National Treasure No. 83 is among the two greatest masterpieces of Silla art, magnificently showcasing the artistic splendor of this kingdom. The Bodhisattva's head is surmounted by a headdress shaped like a chain of three mountains. On the back side of the head, there is a pointed stab used for joining a halo. The serene face with downcast eyes is lit up by a slight smile, and three distinctly visible incised lines on the neck are an insignia of Buddhahood. The torso is left bare, clad only with a necklace, rendered





by two simple embossed lines. In the bottom half of the body, the Bodhisattva is wearing a skirt. The skirt drapes down in generous folds below the right leg which is perched over the left knee. The original foot rest is missing. The current one is in the shape of a lotus blossom on which the left foot is placed was made in recent years by inferring from relevant information gleaned in historical records.

In the minds of many, the National Treasure No. 83-designated as a pensive Bodhisattva, conjures up the wooden pensive Bodhisattva of the Koryuji Temple in Japan <Fig 40>. Although it is made of wood and is much larger in size, the Koryuji Bodhisattva bears a striking resemblance to National Treasure No. 83. The Bodhisattva dons a nearly identical headdress in the shape of three mountains. The two sculptures are also deceptively similar concerning the shape of the pedestal, and the details of the drapery are also the same. On the other hand, unlike National Treasure No. 83, cast in gilt bronze, the Koryuji Bodhisattva is made of red pine wood. Red pine is a rather unusual material for a Japanese Buddha, as Japanese wooden Buddhist sculptures are generally made using camphor wood.

Fig 39 Gilt-bronze pensive Bodhisattva designated as Korean National Treasure No. 83

In order to better understand the close relationship between these two sculptures, one must also look at the pensive Bodhisattva of Bukji-ri in Murya-myeon, Bonghwa-gun, Gyeongbuk <Fig 41>. This Bodhisattva is highly evocative of National Treasure No. 83 in its beautiful and fluid drapery consisting of three tiers of folds and in the way the left hand is rendered lightly holding the right ankle. This sculpture is, however, missing the head and the torso. The remaining lower half alone measures 175 cm in height. The whole statue, therefore, probably stood nearly 3 m. If it had survived intact, this statue would have been the most grand and impressive example of a pensive Bodhisattva. Pensive Bodhisattva statues occupy a special place in the history of Buddhist art. They were popular for a short period around the year 600, after which their production completely ceased. Also, aside from their rarity, the fact that the surviving examples include a

Fig 40 Pensive Bodhisattva of Koryuji Temple, Japan

Fig 41 Stone pensive Bodhisattva of Bukji-ri, Bonghwa with a missing head and torso

gigantic stone sculpture standing close to 3 m in addition to a gilt bronze sculpture of consummate artistry contribute to their historical significance.

No discussion of Buddhist art of the Middle Ancient period can omit Buddha statues of Namsan Mountain in Gyeongju. Namsan Mountain, inscribed as part of the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2000, is dotted by some one hundred fifty temple sites located in its sixty valleys. A total of one hundred seven stone and rock cliff Buddhas stand to form an open-air museum of sorts. Of course, only a handful were created during the Middle Ancient period, and the vast majority date from the Unified Silla period. Examples dating from the Middle Ancient period include the stone Buddha triad of Bae-dong, the Maitreya triad of Jangchanggol, and the Buddha statue of Bulgok inside a stone niche.





Middle Ancient-period Buddhas are mostly gathered on the left slope of Namsan Mountain, indicating that this was where open-air Buddhist sculptures were first created in this period, before they spread to other parts of the mountain. The oldest of them is the stone triad of Bae-dong, made up of three Buddhas with childlike faces <Fig 42>, and the triad of Jangchanggol. These two triads are also the first three-dimensional Buddhist sculptures of Silla. The sculptures in the triad of Bae-dong were initially found scattered at the western foot of Namsan Mountain, and were reunited and placed at the current location in 1923. Following the discovery of a stone tablet containing the chronology of a pagoda belonging to a certain Seonbangsa Temple site, the triad was for a time referred to as the "triad of Seonbangsa Temple." It was later established that the remains where the pagoda tablet was discovered were unrelated to this Buddha triad, as the former dates from Goryeo or thereafter. This trio was also sometimes designated as a Trikaya (three bodies of Buddha), but the correct name for it is "triad," as it consists of a main Buddha with two attendant Bodhisattvas. According to some, the main Buddha in the middle is Amitabha, and so therefore it is an Amitabha triad. Yet there is no definite evidence that supports this view.

A similar triad was discovered in Jangchanggol <Fig 43>. This triad was found in 1925 inside a stone chamber near a mountain path in Jangchanggol of Namsan Mountain and was moved later to the Gyeongju National Museum, where it is currently on display. Based on the fact that the main Buddha in the middle is seated on a pedestal, and furthermore based on the entry of *Samguk yusa* relating the creation of a Maitreya Buddha in Saenguisa Temple, some identify this as the Maitreya triad mentioned in the same book. As a matter of fact, a triad with the main Buddha in a seated position constitutes an extreme rarity in Korean Buddhist sculpture. The three Buddhas have baby-like faces, large heads, and a stubby body. Meanwhile, the belt-like folds on the body of the Buddhas and the swirling folds on the lap are details commonly observed in continental sculptures from the late sixth century. For this reason, the triad is estimated to have been created in the late part of the Middle Ancient period; one may conjecture between the early to the mid-seventh century. The two attendant Bodhisattvas, affectionately nicknamed as the 'baby Buddhas', appear nearly identical to each other. However, some subtle differences exist between them, with regard to the shape of the headdress and the necklace, as well

Fig 42 Stone standing Buddha triad in Bae-dong, Gyeongju

Fig 43 Stone Buddha triad of Jangchanggol in Gyeongju





as the position of the two hands and the drapery. These differences attest to the sculptor's intent to create variations. The youthful proportions of the body with a comparative large head and the candid smile lighting up their guileless face give warmth to these granite sculptures

Although the triads of Bae-dong and Jangchanggol are believed to have been created in roughly the same time period, the former is generally assumed to predate the latter. This is because the Jangchanggol triad is much less coarsely sculpted and more polished in overall appearance than the Bae-dong triad. At any rate, both of them clearly embody the defining characteristics of Middle Ancient-period sculpture, with their stubby bodies and oversized heads.

As for the seated Buddha ensconced in a niche located at the northeastern foot of Namsan Mountain, it bears testimony to the predilection Silla people had for stone grottos <Fig 44>. This Buddha, snuggly settled inside a stone grotto that is about 1 m deep, has a calm and composed with a face seemingly lost in thought. Although the Buddha's face is sculpted in high relief, approaching three dimensions, the body and the throne are in a shallow bas-relief. The two hands are hidden away behind the sleeves, but appear to be joined together in a position resembling the gesture of salutation, thus departing from the *Dhyana mudra*, which was more commonly encountered in this period. Facial features such as the fleshy eyelids and plump lips give a gentle and feminine appearance to this Buddha, who looks as though he would emerge from the rock at any moment to hear out the laments of the sentient beings around. In spite of the round and feminine face conveying a great sense of volume, this sculpture has a rather flat body, with the drapery rendered using simple incised lines. The sculpture is, therefore, likely to have been created sometime in the mid-seventh century. This statue may be considered a predecessor to and a harbinger of the Seokguram grotto Buddha from the later period.

Aside from Namsan Mountain, Buddhist sculptures are present also in other mountains in the Gyeongju area such as Danseoksan Mountain and Seondosan Mountain in the form of gigantic rock-cliff Buddhas. The rock-cliff Buddha group of Sinseonsa Temple in Danseoksan Mountain comprises ten bas-reliefs that are sculpted on the four walls of a niche in a rock cliff at the mid-slope of the mountain <Fig 45>. The niche is presumed to have had a roof and to have been used as a worship space. The northeast wall

of the niche has a standing Buddha, the east wall a standing Bodhisattva, and the south wall another Bodhisattva. The north wall features seven bas-reliefs representing Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as well as individuals who do not appearing to be deities. All of them are sculpted to face the standing Buddha on the northeast wall, indicating that the latter is the main Buddha in this group of sculptures. The group was intended as a Maitreya triad, judging from the two hundred-character inscription on the south wall which includes the statement, "A rock-cliff Maitreya and two Bodhisattvas were made by Sinseonsa Temple." A pensive Bodhisattva is also found at this site but it is unrelated to the Maitreya triad mentioned in the inscription. This sculpture is in fact the earliest example of a pensive Bodhisattva made

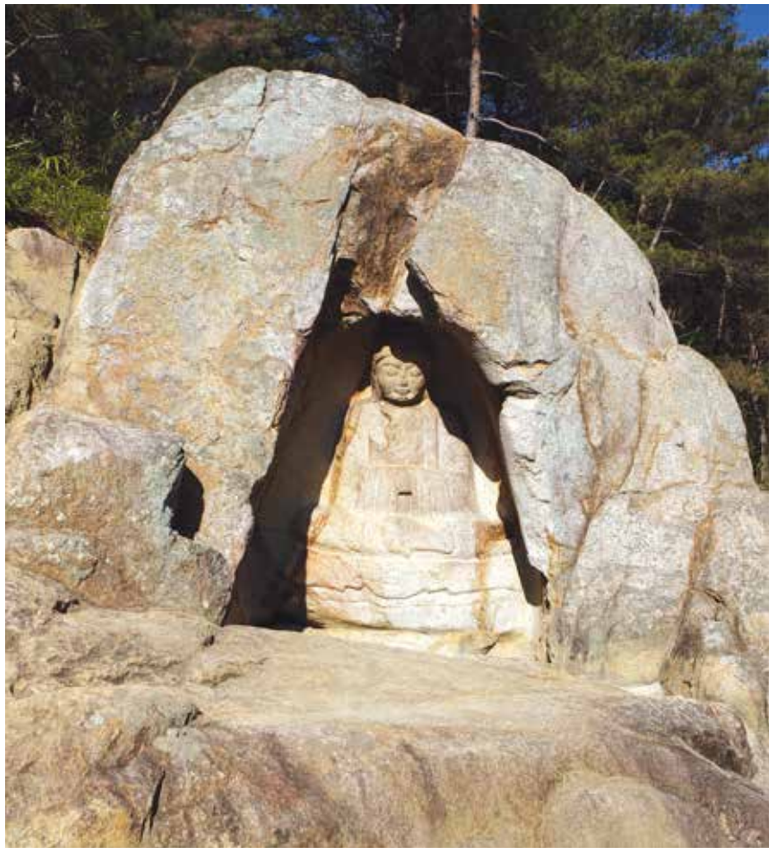


Fig 44 Rock-carved seated Buddha in Bulgok Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju





in Silla <Fig 46>. The pensive Bodhisattva is located next to the standing Buddha on the northeast wall, hence inside the sanctuary of Maitreya, suggesting a close relationship between the two deities.

Meanwhile, in Seondosan, a mountain at the western edge of Silla's capital city, there are gigantic Buddha statues sculpted near its summit <Fig 47>. The main Buddha in the middle was directly carved into the rock cliff. The two attendant Bodhisattvas on the left and right sides of the main Buddha were carved from separate stones and placed there. Cases such as this one in which separate statues were added to a rock-cliff Buddha to form a triad are quite rare. It may have to do with the brittle quality of rock masses in Seondosan. No written records are available to explain the nature of this triad of Seondosan. However, given that this triad is located west of the royal capital and that the left attendant Bodhisattva holds a *kundika*, it could represent Amitabha who gazes at sentient beings from the western pure land of Sukhavati, accompanied by two attendants. Although it is not

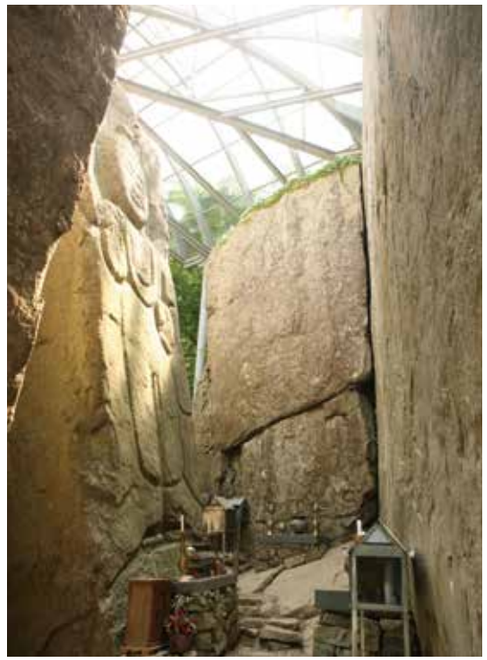


Fig 45 Buddhas of Sinseonsa Temple in Danseoksan Mountain, Gyeongju

Fig 46 Rock-carved pensive Bodhisattva of Sinseonsa Temple in Danseoksan Mountain, Gyeongju

precisely known when the Amitabha cult took hold in Silla, mentions of this cult first appear in *Samguk yusa* in the late seventh century. Those who led this trend are likely the monk Wonhyo (617-686), who played a major role in popularizing the Amitabha cult in Silla, and Uisang, a monk of the Avatamska of Buddhism, in whose doctrine the cult of the pure land of Amitabha was central.

Fig 47 Rock-carved standing Buddha triad in Seondosan Mountain, Gyeongju





4

# Clothing and Jewelry

## Dress Code during King Beopheung's Rule and Related Artifacts

As for clothing styles in Silla, significantly more written records related to this topic are available for the Middle Ancient period than for the Maripgan period. The most remarkable of all is the dress code established as part of a new law proclaimed during the reign of King Beopheung. Meanwhile, information on people's attire in Silla during the sixth century can be found in the *Samguk sagi*, official Chinese history books, as well as the *Nihon shoki*.

As is well known, King Beopheung enacted a new law in the seventh year of his rule (520). One of the highlights of this law is the code of dress for royal officials. Officials were to wear burgundy, red, blue, or yellow attire according to their rank from the highest to the lowest. In the "Silla bongi [Records of Silla]" of the *Samguk sagi*, this event is referred to as *jujajijil* 朱紫之秩. In the "Monographs" section of the same book, its author Kim Bu-sik states, regarding the same dress code, that it was a part of the native tradition of Silla-猶是夷俗. According to Kim, fashions in King Beopheung's time would be still in line with the Dongi style, as opposed to the continental style, as observed in the Central Plain.

Another notable fact is that this color code applied only to people residing in the six *bu* of the capital city. Until the early sixth century, populations outside the capital area were strongly discriminated against.

Officials were selected exclusively among inhabitants of the six bu of Gyeongju, as only they were considered fully-fledged members of Silla society. The dress code also specified the types of materials to be used for the headdress and accessories such as *hol*, the small wood stick officials held during an audience with the king, according to their rank.

According to a sixth-century record in the *Liang Shu* [Book of Liang], headdresses were referred to in Silla as *yujarye*, tops as *wihae*, pants as *gaban*, and shoes as se. Compared to the related records in the *Sanguozhi* which states that about one thousand people wore Chinese-style headdresses, this one seems to suggest a much more widespread use of headgear. Silla people apparently had a peculiar way of pronouncing the word *yujarye*, which is said to be the reason that Silla headdresses were mentioned at all in this book. Meanwhile in the Suishu, Silla people are said to have been fond of white clothes, and women wore their hair in a braided pony tail that was decorated with colorful silk fabrics and beads.

Meanwhile, in the *Nihon Shoki*, one finds an entry about a "marriage of state" between Daegaya and Silla, dated the third year of the Emperor Keitai (529). To improve relations with Silla, Daegaya's king married a princess of Silla. The entry says that when the princess was sent to Daegaya to wed the king, she was accompanied by a retinue of one hundred attendants. The attendants are said to have been placed by the king, in several different counties or prefectures and made to wear Silla costumes. The wording "Silla costumes" suggests that the costumes of Silla were distinct in appearance from those of Daegaya.

In terms of archaeological record, some accessories that offer at least a partial picture of the attire of this period have survived. To begin with, gold crowns appear to have been no longer interred with the dead from the mid-sixth century onward. They were replaced by gilt-bronze or bronze crowns which have been discovered only in small to medium-sized tombs that are located outside the Gyeongju area. These crowns are quite distinct from those of the previous period: the headband is significantly wider, and the upright parts on either side are still four-tiered in the same way as early sixth-century crowns but are generally longer. Antler-shaped uprights were no longer used, and the number of upright parts increased to four or five.

Examples include the gilt bronze crown in the collection of the National Museum of Korea that is formerly known as the gilt bronze crown of





Sangju, the gilt bronze crown of Ji-dong tomb No. 2 in Andong, the bronze crown of Chuam-dong Ga-21 in Donghae, and the bronze crown of the Ha-ri site in Danyang <Fig 48>. Between the late fourth century and the early sixth century, gilt bronze crowns were discovered mainly in large-sized tombs located outside the capital area. These gilt bronze crowns of the later generation lack uniformity in style and design and are often coarsely crafted. They, therefore, are likely to have been locally produced. The bronze crown of Chuam-dong, meanwhile, discovered together with human skeletal remains, belonged to a woman. Given the modest size of the


Fig 48 Silla crowns from the period of decline of their uses (①crown formerly known from Sangju, ②Ji-dong tomb No. 2, ③Chuam-dong tomb No. Ga-21, ④Ha-ri)

tomb, the crown musthave been worn by a shaman or a person who had a religious function.

Secondly, earrings with pendants are almost completely absent at archaeological sites dating from the late sixth century and after. Earrings were the most commonly recovered artifacts in stone-covered wooden chamber tombs until then vanished along with other precious metal jewelry. Rare examples of earrings from this period are thick-loop gilt bronze earrings of the Hwangnyongsa Temple site and thin-loop gilt bronze earrings found in Seungsam Village tomb No. 37 in Dongcheon-dong, Gyeongju. The earrings of Hwangnyongsa date from the early seventh century and are simplified and stylized variants of thick-loop earrings that were highly popular during the sixth century. As it is evidence to the continued production of thick-loop earrings, this item is considered of great significance.

Fig 49 Belts ornaments in the Nuam-ri style(left: Burial No. A-Na-19, Cheong-ri, Sangju, right: Stone chamber No. I-B-165 at the Comprehensive Sports Park site, Dalseong, Daegu)





Thirdly, around the mid-sixth century when gold items disappeared from Silla tombs, an accessory of a new type became popular and known as Nuam-ri-style belt ornaments. These belt ornaments are found inside relatively small tombs, compared to the previous period, and consist of three simple parts including a hook (*gyogu*), ornamental plates (*gwapan*), and belt-end ornaments (*daedangeumgu*) <Fig 49>. They were then replaced by belt fittings of yet another type sometime in the early seventh century. The latter are known as Hwangnyongsa-style belt fittings, as those discovered under the stone foundation of a now-disappeared wooden pagoda on the former grounds of Hwangnyongsa Temple are considered the prototypes. The new-style belt ornaments were found at the Hwangnyongsa site together with Nuam-ri-style examples. These two styles are heterogeneous as continuity between them is absent. The new style is reminiscent of that of belt fittings of the Sui or Tang Periods and may have been influenced by them.

## Adoption of Tang Period Dress Style and Related Artifacts

In the early seventh century, tension escalated among the Three Kingdoms. To guard itself from the military threat of its two neighbors, Silla actively approached the Tang while taking steps to build the capacity needed to realize a plan to unify the Korean peninsula. In terms of the topic of clothing style, the introduction of Tang Period-style attire and headdresses in the third year of Queen Jindeok (r. 647-654) stands out.

According to the "Monographs" section of the *Samguk sagi*, Kim Chun-chu traveled to the Tang in the second year of Queen Jindeok (648) and requested permission for Silla people to wear Tang Period-style clothes. This request was granted by Emperor Taizu who also sent with him clothes and officials' belts. One finds similar information also in the "Records of Silla" in the *Samguk sagi*. It is said that Tang-style attire was worn for the first time in January of the third year of Jindeok's reign (649), and during the following year (650), the queen issued the order that ivory hol be used by officials of the jingol rank. Meanwhile, in *Nihon shoki*, there is an entry dated the second Taika year (651) where it is said that Silla envoys on an official visit were sent away for wearing Tang-style costumes, hence corroborating the related events in the *Samguk sagi*. Again according to 'Monographs' and the 'Record of Silla' in *Samguk sagi*, in 664 (fourth year of King Munmu's rule),

Fig 50 Clay figurines found inside the stone chamber tomb of Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju





wives of officials also adopted Tang Period-style clothes.

While there is no way of knowing details about the appearance of clothing and belts that Kim Chun-chu received from the Tang court, they were probably similar to those represented in clay figures (*toyong*) of the stone chamber tomb of Hwangseong-dong that date from the late seventh century, or those of the stone chamber tomb of Yonggang-dong that date from the late seventh century to the early eighth century. Meanwhile, the officials' belts must have been what ornaments researchers refer to as "Tang-style belt ornaments." As a matter of fact, *toyong* are highly informative of the dress style in this period of time. *Toyong*, unlike *tou*, the term for clay figurines in general, are clay figures made from the outset for use as grave goods. The mortuary features of this period were stone chamber tombs, and small clay dolls representing the family members and retainers of the dead or soldiers were interred there. This custom was brought from the Sui and Tang Dynasties. Clay figures from the stone chamber tomb of Hwangseong-dong are precisely from the Middle Ancient period.

The Hwangseong-dong tomb yielded six such figurines. Three of them represent civil officials, one is a military official, and two are women. Men are shown in a recognizable Tang style, wearing tall brimless hats on their head while dressed in pants and a long tunic-like garment. The shoes, although hidden by the long coat, were probably made of leather. The figures of officials are succinct in detail and are left unpainted. One of the two figures of a woman which was discovered intact <Fig 50, bottom> is of particular interest. The woman is holding a wine or water jug in one hand and has a smile on her face. There is a native flavor about her clothes, and the hair is gathered at the back of the head. Thus this figurine might date from before 664, the year when the wives of officials were made to wear Tang Period-style clothes. However, one problem with this hypothesis is that the woman depicted does not seem to be the wife of an official and may be instead an entertainer or a woman with some other special status. Meanwhile, one of the male figures who is shown wearing a peculiar hat has deep-set eyes and a large nose <Fig 50, top>, and is thought to be a Tang Period person by some researchers based on the style of the hat. This view is however contradicted by the round collar trim that is certainly not an element of Tang dress.

# 5 Production of Agricultural Artifacts and General Artifacts

## Agriculture

One of the major archaeological remains that can shed light on how agriculture was practiced in Silla during the Middle Ancient period is the Geumjang-ri site located in Gyeongju. This agricultural field site lies on the left shore of the Hyeongsangang River, hugging the Gyeongju basin from its left side, and occupies a corner of a valley plain that extends in the area. Once a farm plot, the land bears traces of furrows that run parallel to the ridges, which furthermore were replowed in a direction over time. Such changes could be due to shifts in irrigation paths or for restoration of the fertility of soil.

Artifacts recovered from the furrows and ridges of the plot all date from the sixth century and range from various pottery fragments including lids, footless goblets, vessel feet, mouth fragments of short-necked jars, and handles. Pottery, fishing net weights, and beads were also among the items unearthed there. During the process of sampling soil, eighty carbonized plant specimens were recovered from the site including thirty-eight grass specimens (six rice grains, sixteen unhulled barleycorns and sixteen wheat grains) and fifteen beans (twelve red beans, one soybean and two other beans of unknown type), along with twenty-seven wild grass specimens. The carbonized grains discovered at the agricultural field remains at Geumjang-ri were found in cultivated soil layers





Fig 51 Bird's-eye view of an ancient agricultural field at Geumjang-ri, Gyeongju

near Silla's capital and are of great significance as they provide direct evidence revealing the types of grains farmed during this period of time.

This site is located in a fertile flood plain near the royal capital and must have been cultivated on a continuous basis since prior to the sixth century, rather than being exploited for a limited time period by the people of the capital area. The fact that it forms a farming zone independent from the capital area supports this view. Furthermore, as the first agriculturally- related archaeological site in Gyeongju, it offers precious glimpses into the agricultural as well as socio-economic history of Silla, providing basic information related to dry-paddy farming techniques, the diet of Silla people and agricultural manpower.

One of the most important requirements to engage in agricultural production in a stable and uninterrupted manner is the operation of an efficient irrigation system. During the Middle Ancient period, dams, and barrages were built as state-initiated projects. Thanks to these irrigation projects, they were able to develop wide alluvial plains into arable land, instead of cultivating only valley plains that were irrigated by rainwater. The Cheongje Reservoir of Yeongcheon was constructed in 536, as stated by the inscription on the stone

stele discovered near it. The reservoir irrigated floodplains on either side of the Geumhogang River. Another inscription (with the era name *Jeonguon* (Ch: *Zhenyuan*)) on the same stele that dates to the late eighth century indicates that this reservoir was continuously managed. In fact, the reservoir is still used today for irrigation purposes.

The Musulojak stele, meanwhile, records the construction of a reservoir in a brook that runs through the floodplain in Sincheon, Daegu. The stele, erected in 578, mentions the involvement of an engineer named Daegongcheok and the fact that the project was supervised by a Buddhist monk. In this regard, it may be worth mentioning the case of Sayamaike, an ancient water reservoir in Osaka of which the engineering was also supervised by a Buddhist monk. This is an instance that attests to the important role played by Buddhist monks as engineers, distinct from that of spreading the doctrines of a new religion. Moreover, Gonggeomji, a reservoir in Sangju, was revealed through excavation

Fig 52 Cheongje Reservoir stele in Yeongcheon, inscribed with the era name Jeongwon





to have been constructed by the building a dam on reinforced ground and had a wooden barrel-based system for the evacuation of water. Gonggeomji has long been dated to approximately the eighth century or later. However, the analysis of wood used for its construction places it in the late seventh century. This result warrants the dating of the reservoir to an earlier time, i.e. the late part of the Middle Ancient period. The levee in Yaksa-dong in Ulsan also seems to have been constructed in the later part of the Middle Ancient period.

## Production Facilities

Among pottery and roof-tile kiln sites at the outskirts of Gyeongju, examples that belong to the Middle Ancient period are the Songok-dong, Mulcheon-ri site and the Hwagok-ri site. These two sites were in use for an extended period of time from the Maripgan to the Unified Silla period, of which the Middle Ancient period is only a small part. It is for this reason that it is difficult to form a picture of how pottery and roof tiles were produced specifically during the Middle Ancient period based only on the currently available evidence.

Fig 53 A kiln site at the roof-tile production remains of Hwacheon-ri, Gyeongju

A roof-tile production site which was clearly established as having been in operation during the Middle Ancient period, in other words, in the early seventh century, is the Hwacheon-ri kiln site in Gyeongju. Nine kilns used for both pottery and roof-tiles were discovered at this site along with the remains of a workshop. The kilns were semi-subterranean ovens and the inclination of the floor was less than 10 degrees. There were no stairs or steps inside the kiln chamber, which measures 426-570 cm long and 182-274 cm wide. Roof tiles recovered from this site included convex roof-end tiles with the design of a lotus blossom that has a single row of petals and an oversized plain roof tiles with a beaten pattern created with a short paddle.

Back in the Maripgan period iron production facilities—with the exception of blacksmith shops where consumption goods were produced—were had already moved to locations outside the capital area, often near an iron mine. Iron production facilities from the Middle Ancient period have been identified mainly in the lower reaches of the Nakdonggang River. Ore dressing and iron production remains are found across the lower Nakdonggang River basin from Miryang to Yangsan. At the ore dressing site at Mulgeum, Yangsan, iron ore appears to have been placed in a long ditch where water was poured to separate minerals by density and size. Meanwhile, the analysis of spent slag found at the Sachon archaeological

Fig 54 A tempering furnace at the Geumgok archaeological site, Miryang





site in Miryang revealed that this place was an iron smelting facility. At both of these sites, although they go back to the Maripgan period, the iron processing activity on a large scale began in the Middle Ancient period. These two places became the main bases for iron production probably because both of them were under Silla's control since early on, and also because of the abundant availability of raw materials and convenient access to waterways.

The largest Silla iron production site from the Middle Ancient period, discovered to date is the Geumgok site in Miryang. As many as eighty-six iron furnaces have been identified at this site, which provides a comprehensive picture of the full spectrum of the iron manufacturing process, from smelting to the production of iron objects. Some of the furnaces were refining and tempering furnaces and some others melting furnaces. Features also included those for calcination of iron ores, slag dump, clay storage, charcoal kiln, pits and workshops. Near the furnaces, slag from forging and moulds were recovered along with a variety of iron minerals. The slag dump yielded massive quantities of waste materials from the smelting process, fragments of furnace walls and blast pipes, as well as a variety of other iron materials. The iron production site is presumed to have been used mainly during the sixthcentury or at least no later than the early seventh century.

## General Artifacts

Large burial mounds built in Gyeongju during the Maripgan period were moved to mountains and hills nearby and the examples on the outside of the capital area became progressively rarer from the mid-sixth century. They were gradually replaced by stone chamber tombs with a tunnel entrance, which became the norm. Family tombs in which the deceased members of a family were successively added were built because of their popularity. This reflects a radical change in the way people in Silla viewed death. The phenomenon also coincided with the sharp reduction of grave goods interred with the dead, both in terms of absolute numbers and variety.

The most common types of pottery buried in tombs during this period are goblets with a significantly shorter foot than in the earlier era, and long-necked jars with a mouth rim shaped like the letter 'L.' Variants of the goblets on a tall foot were produced in the previous period and into the current, but

in much smaller quantities. They were largely replaced by lidded bowls that were almost spherically shaped. Lids were developed to have an inner ledge. Also popular in this period were jars with a narrow neck that were decorated with various surface patterns. Initially, they featured incised patterns that were widely used in the preceding period consisting of a top row of triangular shapes and bottom row of circular shapes. Toward the late sixth century new stamped designs appeared. Also, early jars with a narrow neck had a short neck with a horizontally oblong, ample body. The neck became longer subsequently, and the body became flattened.

Fig 55 Pottery items excavated from Nuam-ri tomb No. Ga-60, Chungju

Fig 56 Pottery items discovered inside stone chamber tombs of Bangnae-ri, Gyeongju





Once into the Middle Ancient period, the differences in pottery style that existed between the capital city and areas outside it during the Maripgan period rapidly disappeared, giving rise to a more homogenous style. Not only did the shapes of pottery vessels become similar, but the method of production also became standardized. This was probably the result of pottery workshops across the country becoming subject to central regulation, which also made it possible for artisans to share technical information. Ceramic ware became generally shorter in height and simpler in design than those of the Maripgan period. At the beginning, pottery featured patterns created using a compass and an awl that were placed at regular intervals in different and clearly divided sections of the surface. The introduction of stamped patterns resulted in further standardization. The more rudimentary

Fig 57 Roof-end tiles excavated from the Hwacheon-ri kiln site, Gyeongju

Fig 58 Ancient-style roof-end tile recovered at the Hwangnyongsa Temple site, Gyeongju

Fig 59 Baekje-style roof-end tile recovered at the Hwangnyongsa Temple site, Gyeongju

Fig 60 Lotus-motif roof-end tile recovered at the Hwangnyongsa Temple site, Gyeongju

shapes and standardized techniques made mass production of pottery possible because they had the effect of simplifying the production process.

Roof tiles that appear to have been used during the Maripgan period only for a few important buildings were used more widely with the wave of construction of Buddhist temples following the recognition of Buddhism as the state religion of Silla. Early roof-end tiles were convex tiles adorned with the design of a lotus flower with sharply pointed petals. They were first used in Wolseong where the royal palace was located, and were later used also in Hwangnyongsa Temple, as evidenced by archaeological finds. Due to the hardy and vigorous impression conveyed by the lotus design, these roof-end tiles were sometimes thought to have been influenced by Goguryeo tiles. However, judging from the rather clumsy craftsmanship, they are more likely to be homegrown-style items than being associated with a non-local tradition. Convex roof-end tiles that feature lotus petals with gently curled-up tips have also been discovered at Wolseong and the Hwangnyongsa site. Considering how written records mention that groups of Baekje builders are said to have participated in the construction of Silla Buddhist temples during the Middle

Fig 61 Roof-end tiles discovered at the Hwagok-ri kiln site, Gyeongju





Ancient period, roof-end tiles of this type could be Baekje-style tiles. On the other hand, lotus roof-end tiles in Silla's own native style have a distinctive ridge in each petal; hence, slightly less smooth-looking in the overall impression. This style, vigorous yet warm and temperate, was perfected in the late sixth century and is considered to embody the aesthetic sensitivity of Silla of the Middle Ancient period well.

Toward the mid-sixth century, changes occurred also in the appearance of crowns, the most important status accessory in the preceding period, as well as in the method of their production. The headband became significantly wider, and the antler-shaped uprights disappeared, with the total number of uprights increasing to four or five. The gilt bronze crown of Ha-ri, Danyang is a great example displaying typical characteristics of crowns from this period. Four uprights are fastened to the wide headband using copper wire. The tree branch-llike uprights exhibit the characteristics of the period of decline and have round holes that were created using a chisel.

Earrings with pendants disappeared almost completely from Silla tombs from the late sixth century onward. Gold earrings, which were the most basic accessories, vanished from stone-covered wooden chamber tombs without a trace. Only two pairs of earrings dating from this period have been discovered thus far: the thick-loop earrings unearthed at the Hwangnyongsa Temple site and the thin-loop earrings found inside Seungsam Village tomb No. 37 in Dongcheon-dong, Gyeongju.

The earrings of Hwangnyongsa were excavated from the rammed earth layer beneath the area where the temple's wooden pagoda stood. They were therefore buried there as a jindangu, or an object placed in the foundation of a structure as a prayer for the safety of a building. The construction of the wooden pagoda of Hwangnyongsa began in 643 and was completed two years later in 645. Therefore, the earrings must have been buried there in approximately 643. The earrings were made sometime in around the early seventh century show that they became much simplified compared to those of Maripgan Period.

Around the mid-sixth century when gold accessories appear to have disappeared from Silla tombs, the existing style of belt fittings characterized by openwork representing three leaves gave way to a new style in which the hook and belt-end ornament are accorded greater importance. Belt fittings of this type, such as the ones from the Nuam-ri tumulus group in Chungju or the Cheong-ri tumulus group in Sangju, are generally found in tombs that are

Fig 62 Thick-loop earrings discovered at the HwangnyongsaTemple site, Gyeongju

Fig 63 Belt fittings in the Hwangnyongsa-style from Burial No. A-Ga-11, Cheong-ri, Sangju(right: detail)

smaller in size than those of the preceding period.

In the early seventh century, belt fittings of a radically new style appeared.

Those discovered beneath the foundation stone of the wooden pagoda of Hwangnyongsa are some of the representative examples. These belts have an ornamental plate decorated with floral design. Examples include those discovered inside Yean-ri tomb No. 49 in Gimhae and tomb A-Ga-9, stone chamber No. 10 and stone chamber A-Na-2 of Cheong-ri, and Durak-ri tomb No. 3 in Namwon. Belt fittings of this type appear to have been influenced by those of the Sui or Tang Periods and display various surface designs, often depicting a human face, bird, or the face of a goblin.

Iron goods discovered in tombs from this period are mainly knives, although one or two arrowheads or farming implements were also found in some cases. Tombs containing ornamental weapons or horse fittings are extremely rare in this period. Restrictions placed by the central government and the new tendency toward less extravagant funerals could have been contributing factors. During the Middle Ancient period, Silla waged numerous wars and this must have led to increased efforts for improving existing weapons and developing new weapons. However, as weapons were rarely offered as





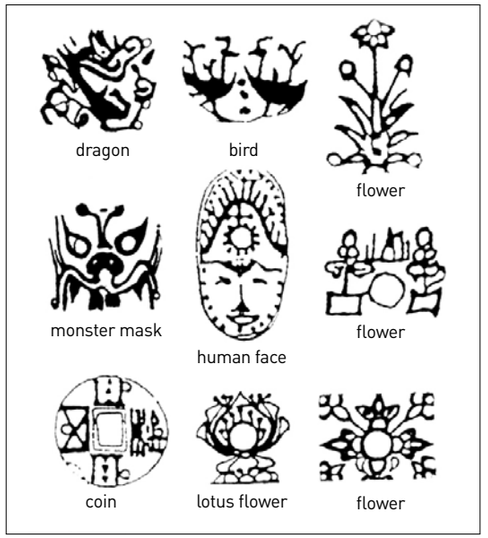



Fig 64 Various designs used in Hwangnyongsa-style belt fittings

Fig 65 Iron bells from Burial No. 2, Ji-dong, Andong

grave goods with the dead during this period. This remains conjecture given the paucity of physical evidence. Nevertheless, in the *Samguk sagi* there are names of army divisions wielding special types of weapons, such as *Nodang*, *Unjedang*, *Chungdang*, and Seoktudang. We also find in the same book mentions of the use of caltrops by mounted troops as a defense weapon. Future excavations of sites in Silla's borderland regions may reveal new evidence that may shed light on weaponry in this period.

A notable item among iron artifacts of this period is the iron bell. They date mostly from the early sixth century and have been occasionally discovered in stone chamber tombs with a side entrance. Found mainly in areas lying east of the Nakdonggang River during the early sixth century, they were also recovered from the mid-sixth century and onward in places situated west of the same river, including Yeondang-ri in Goseong, Wolseong-ri in Sacheon, and Jeopo-ri in Hapcheon. Iron bells are generally discovered together with forging tools, and so it is thought that their owners could have been iron production specialists. However, it is equally possible that these bells were ritual instruments used by shamans or other persons of religious function. Gilt bronze or bronze crowns from the period of decline mentioned earlier also appear to have been owned by such people.

# 6 Trade and Exchange

## Trade and Exchange with the Northern Dynasties and Tang

In 553, Silla brought the Hangang River valley under its control. This provided Silla with a gateway to the Asian continent, enabling direct trade. As a matter of fact, the *Samguk sagi* attests to this through records to the effect that Silla had substantial trade activity with continental dynasties in the Middle Ancient period. After a cool period in the aftermath of the unification of the Three Kingdoms, Silla was soon able to repair its relationship with the Tang through which it gained access to new cultural goods and sociocultural institutions. Silla's trade relationship with the Japanese archipelago continued uninterrupted. At archaeological sites across Silla's former territory, continental (Chinese) artifacts have been recovered along with many items that were locally produced based on Chinese models in a style that blends local tastes and flavors. Noteworthy examples of them are as follows:

Let us begin with artifacts that were imported from the northern dynasties and Tang in a finished form. The *Chang ping wu zhu* coin of the Northern Qi was found among the votive objects in the sarira reliquary of Bunhwangsa and is a case in point. Moreover, a stone grave tablet of the type popularly used in the Southern and Northern Dynasties period was discovered in a stone chamber tomb dated to the early seventh century that





Fig 66 Artifacts from Gyeongju evidencing the existence of trade and exchange with China (①Bunhwangsa Temple, ②Wolji, ③④Hwangnyongsa Temple site)

belongs to the Yonggang-dong tumulus group in Gyeongju, along with go stones, a glazed ceramic vase, and a belt hook. The occupant of this tomb is likely to have been either a Silla man who stayed in China for an extended period of time and became culturally assimilated, or simply a person of continental origin.

Furthermore, the Tang-dynasty coin *Kai yuan tong bao* was unearthed at a building feature in Wolji <Fig 66-②>. Finally, a bronze mirror featuring the four sacred animals, in a classical Sui-dynasty style was discovered under the stone foundation of a wooden pagoda in the former grounds of Hwangnyongsa Temple <Fig 66-③>.

Among the items that were inspired by continental goods, belt fittings provide the most notable examples. As was already mentioned, toward the mid-sixth century when gold artifacts disappeared from Silla tombs, belt ornaments with three leaves in openwork were replaced by a new type known as Nuam-ri-style belt ornaments. Sometime in the early seventh

Fig 67 Artifacts from China excavated from stone chamber tomb No. 6, Yonggang-dong, Gyeongju(①tombstone, ②*go* pieces, ③*siyu* vessel, ④belt buckle)





Fig 68 Nuam-ri-style belt fittings (①Stone chamber tomb No. 5 at Seolhwa-dong, Daegu, ②Stone chamber tomb No. 1 at Dongcheon-dong House No. 354-1, Gyeongju) and Hwangnyongsa-style belt fittings (③HwangnyongsaTemple site, ④Burial No. 49 at Yean-ni, Kimhae)

century, another type of belt ornamentry known as Hwangnyongsa-style belts <Fig 68-③ to 68-④> reminiscent of similar items from the Sui Dynasty.

## Trade and Exchange with the Japanese Archipelago

In a stone chamber tomb located in zone 1 of the Deokcheon-ri group (tomb No. 24 of section 1) in Uljin, a piece of curved jade with knots along an edge that are of Japanese origin has been discovered. Given that it was

found together with a Nuam-ri-style belt hook, the jade could date from sometime in the late sixth century. Meanwhile, in the Japanese archipelago, gold rings of Silla origin have been recovered at a ritual site in Okinoshima. Moreover, the discovery of Silla pottery, as exemplified by the items from the Ishigami archaeological site in Nara <Fig 69-2>, has been reported in various places across the Japanese archipelago.

In the Kinkanzuka tomb in Gunma Prefecture, a Silla-style gilt bronze crown was discovered. The crown with a wide headband has five uprights each with four tree branch-like prongs. Although it resembles a Silla crown in its general appearance, this crown is different in its details and was crafted using a different production method. Presumed to date from the mid-sixth century or thereafter, it was probably locally produced using Silla crowns as a model.

The Shosoin at Todaiji in Nara Prefecture is the former treasure house of the Japanese imperial family. In 1933, while the cover to a volume of the treatise section of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (*Hwaeomgyeong-non jechiljil*) was being repaired, a census document of Silla was discovered by chance. The mulberry paper sheets on which this document was written were re-used to make the cover of this book. Although just two sheets of paper, this document offers fascinating glimpses into life in Silla villages nearly 1300 years ago.

The Shosoin collection includes a pair of gilt bronze scissors, which is strikingly similar to the gilt bronze scissors that were found at Wolji, one of close to 15,000 items recovered there. Although somewhat less finely crafted than the Wolji pair, these scissors were unquestionably made in Silla.


Fig 69 Artifacts evidencing the existence of trade and exchange between Silla and the Japanese archipelago (①tomb No. 2 of Section 1 of Locality 1 of the Deokcheon-ri site, Uljin, ②Ishigami, Nara Prefecture, ③④Shosoin, Japan, ⑤Wolji, Gyeongju)

Part 2

# Unified Silla

**Cultural Zenith of Silla**

The Unified Silla Period

Chapter 1

# Cultural Zenith of Silla

## The Unified Silla Period







Silla's history comprises several periods, each marked by considerable changes affecting its society. However, no event re-shaped the course of its history as definitively as the wave of wars with its two neighbors, Baekje and Goguryeo, beginning in the mid-seventh century. Based on these wars, Silla's history is often divided into pre- and post-unification periods. Pre-unification Silla is frequently termed Silla of the Three Kingdoms Period or Ancient Silla to distinguish it from Unified Silla. Perhaps not surprisingly, the term "Unified Silla" was never used by the people of this period, in either official or unofficial capacity; it was coined by modern historians for convenience in attempting to cast a new light on Silla's history. However, the perception that Silla's history consisted of two distinct parts can be gleaned from *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, both written during the Goryeo Dynasty. As can be seen, the bipartite division of Silla history was not a concept created out of whole cloth in modern times.

A common understanding situates the beginning of the Unified Silla period at 654, the year King Muyeol ascended the throne as the twenty-ninth ruler of Silla, not at the conclusion of the unification wars during King Munmu's rule. This perspective is mainly based on the significance of the radical sociopolitical shift under King Muyeol's reign. From a cultural point of view, however, it may be more sensible to see the year 676 as the completion of the unification of the Three Kingdoms as the beginning of the Unified Silla period. As the war came to its end, stability was restored in Silla society, enabling the process of cultural merger of the three formerly independent states and shaping a new culture uniquely recognizable as that of Unified Silla.

Based on the sociopolitical changes of Silla society, the Unified Silla itself is divided into two periods. The earlier period corresponds to the eight reigns that lasted one hundred and twenty-seven years from King Muyeol's reign to King Hyegong's (r. 765-780). The later period, lasting one hundred and fifty-five years, spans twenty reigns to Queen Seondeok's (r. 780-785). Such division of Unified Silla's history is a practice inherited from *Samguk sagi* in which it is divided into the Middle and Late Periods. In fact, the attempt to divide the history of Unified Silla into two chapters appears to have existed already in late Silla. Such periodization has proved valid and is in line with the current understanding of Silla history.

There is a significant difference in the length of time as well as the number of reigns between the Middle and Late Periods. Whereas the average length of a reign was sixteen years in the Middle Period, it was

a mere 7.2 years on average in the Late Period. Such discrepancy clearly indicates an increase in political upheavals and economic instabilities during the Late Period. Although a long reign does not necessarily equate with stability, historical facts generally attest to this tendency.

During the earlier Unified Silla period, the kingdom achieved rapid growth both politically and socially, greatly benefiting from the synergy produced by the unification. The effects of such synergy are visible in the various cultural activities we know of from written records as well as archaeological discoveries. As such, it is not surprising that the Middle Period is often considered to be the heyday of Silla's ten-century history. In contrast, the Late Period is viewed as a period of gradual decline, rife with unrest and instabilities. Indeed, general decline can be seen clearly throughout the different levels of Silla society of this period.

Sociopolitical changes are bound to effect changes in the everyday life and culture of a given society. Silla was no exception as its territory and population more than tripled after the unification of the Three Kingdoms. Moreover, the absorption of advanced cultures of Goguryeo and Baekje from conquered peoples brought about profound cultural changes. Silla also actively embraced cultural goods and institutions of the Tang Dynasty, its ally in the unification wars, gaining access to Central Asian, Arab, and Roman cultural goods brought via the Silk Road. Said changes brought Silla's culture to a new level both qualitatively and quantitatively, rendering it more cosmopolitan. Hyecho and other Silla monks traveled to India through ground or sea routes, in search of illumination in the cradle of Buddhism. The fact that the name Silla was known in far-away India at that time testifies to the scope of external trade and exchanges carried out by its people. Furthermore, evidence shows that some Arabesque and Sogdian merchants settled in Silla. Such breadth of Silla's outreach explains how Jang Bo-go was able to build a maritime empire that dominated international trade from his Cheonghaejin base in the ninth century; it was the long-accumulated experience in international trade that helped a Silla man emerge as the merchant-king of the sea.

As is evident, the overall culture and lifestyle in Silla improved tremendously and reached an impressive level of sophistication following the unification. Prosperity also brought cultural enjoyment to larger segments of its population. Such developments are clearly reflected in written records as well as physical evidence.





# 1 Cities

The urbanization process in Silla's capital area unfolded differently from the rest of the country. Gyeongju was slowly urbanized, as centralized rule was gradually implemented during the Maripgan period, and human and material resources started becoming concentrated there as a result. Events registered in written records, such as the naming of the various villages of the capital in 469 during King Jabi's reign and the repair of the main roads in 487, reflect the progress toward urbanization in Gyeongju. However, urban planning in the strictest sense of the term the systematic planning of city streets and other developments appears to have begun no earlier than the mid-sixth century. Outside the capital area, cities emerged even later. The urbanization process there is believed to have kickstarted after the creation of the nine ju (*cities*) and five sogyeong (provincial capital cities) during the Unified Silla period. Of course, the nine ju and five *sogyeong* were not established at wholly new bases, and there must have been some level of urban agglomeration in regional centers that predated this event. However, finding vestiges that can attest to this hypothesis is all but impossible today because planning projects were carried out simultaneously in all nine ju and five *sogyeong*.

## Urban Planning and Landscaping in the Royal Capital

When Gyeongju started to assume the role of the royal capital of Silla during the Maripgan period, the city grew populous, its population density increasing particularly in the middle of the Gyeongju basin. This densely populated area was called Wolseong, located next to the royal palace. According to written records, the royal palace was situated near the northwestern foot of Namsan Mountain, the center of this area since the early Saro-guk period. With the Namcheon Stream running by it, the royal palace had a crescent-shaped plan, constructed to maintain harmony with its natural surroundings. The tomb site for royals and members of the ruling elite, lying northwest of the palace, could have influenced the choice of this location. The idea would have been to maintain a close yet appropriate distance between the king's dwelling on earth and his postmortem abode. Wolseong is about 2,340 m in outer circumference, 890 m east to west and 260 m north to south, with a total area of 193,845 $m^2$. Along with Wolseong, fortresses that simultaneously served as defense structures and emergency shelters, such as Myeonghwalsanseong (earthen fortress), Namsantoseong, and Dodangsantoseong, were also built around the capital city. In the late fifth century, in fact, the king took refuge in Myeonghwal Mountain Fortress in anticipation of an attack from Goguryeo, ultimately staying over ten years.

Shaped like a crescent or half-moon when seen from the sky, Wolseong is also referred to as Banwolseong. A roof tile engraved with *Jaeseong*, meaning the king's city, was discovered at this site, indicating that it was indeed the location of the royal palace. Several excavation projects have been carried out at this site since the colonial period, in places including the city wall, near the east gate, the immediate outskirts, and general house sites, as well as sites of gullipju buildings (buildings without foundations, with pillars that are directly drilled into the ground) and the moat. Ground reconnaissance has also been conducted. More recently, following a round of subsurface geophysical exploration <Fig 1>, excavation was conducted in the inner area of this site, which yielded some concrete clues as to how the royal palace might have looked both inside and outside.

Wolseong, whose construction is presumed to have begun in the early Maripgan period with stone and dirt as the main materials, appears to have been surrounded by a pit-style moat enclosed by a wooden fence from





Fig 1 Areas of subsurface geophysical exploration as seen in this aerial photograph of Wolseong, Gyeongju

the outset. Later, toward the late fifth century, the pit-type moat was filled and replaced by five pond-style moats built in stone, distributed along the northwest wall of the city in a mildly winding course. Meanwhile, in an area lying further northwest from the Wolseong district, twenty-three gullipju house sites were identified. Buildings such as government offices or military facilities, therefore, appear to have been constructed near the royal palace from early on. The stone-built moats of Wolseong are presumed to have been built or re-built over several successive rounds and believed to have existed until sometime soon after the unification of the Three Kingdoms.

According to the "Record of Silla" in *Samguk sagi*, the royal palace was again repaired in the nineteenth year of King Munmu's reign (679). Donggung, or the East Palace, is said to have been constructed also at this time, with names given to the various gates. Furthermore, judging from the roof tiles engraved with the words "*Uibong 4-nyeon gaeto* [ground- broken in the fourth Uibong year]" discovered across the royal capital, there seems to have been a large-scale construction project performed around this time. Also around this time, a row of buildings with a foundation and cornerstones appears to have been constructed in the area north of the stone moats of Wolseong, running parallel to the city wall. Meanwhile, in the areas south of

Fig 2 The maximum estimated spatial extent of the palace

Fig 3 A view of Wolji and Donggungji (the excavated area in the middle of the photo)





Cheomseongdae and north of Gyerim Forest, a large number of buildings, presumed to have been shrines for ancestors of the royal family, were set up. In other words, the royal palace complex appears to have greatly expanded to encompass the buildings at today's Wolji (Anapji) and those on its west side and Donggung in the east <Fig 2>.

In an area contiguous to Wolji, which was excavated and restored in the 1970s, twenty-six building sites were identified lying to the east and northeast <Fig 3>. Of this area, the section with three large house sites located on the northeast side of Wolji and forming a neat row on the north- south axis, is conjectured to be the center of Donggung <Fig 4>.

The various changes in the royal palace must have occurred in tandem with the development of the royal capital. The space in the capital city appears to have been divided into units of a certain size. For instance, *Jeungbo munheonbigo* [Augmented Reference Compilation of Documents], a book from the late Joseon Dynasty, reports that there were land allotments in the Gyeongju area, a practice originating from the Silla period; excavation results testify to the validity of this record. The city was divided into several areas by roads running east to west and north to south. These lots, surrounded by roads on all four sides, were the city blocks, referred to as *bang* in written records. The bang were not all the same size. For example, zone S1E1, located east of the Hwangnyongsa site, extends 172.5 m north to south and

Fig 4 Estimated foundations of a Donggungji building feature

167.5 m east to west, when measured from the middle of one road to the middle of another. On the other hand, the bang in the Seongdong-dong and Seobu-dong area is about 150 m long north to south and 120 m east to west. Finally, at the ancient site of Hwangnyongsa Temple, comprising four *bang*, each bang measures 140 m in both north to south and east to west.

This disparity in the size of bang may be partially explained by the fact that they were created in different periods. However, the discrepancy might have been so because the allotment occurred successively and area by area, rather than all at once, even when the planning took place during the same era. For example, the central axis of the bang identified in the Daereungwon area is not aligned with that of the bang in the area north of the Bukcheon or the one in the Nangsan area. The east-to-west road and the drains in the former are significantly tilted northwest to southeast. Some interpret this particularity to have occurred by design, as rainwater drains toward the west in the Gyeongju basin whose east side is elevated above the west side.

The creation of city blocks is believed to have begun in the mid-sixth century and completed in the eighth century. When Hwangnyongsa was constructed in the mid-sixth century, the land around it was divided into square lots. Thereafter, these lots called bang were created progressively in places like the Guhwang-dong and the Inwang-dong area sometime in the early seventh century. In the mid- to late seventh century, the area north of Hwangnyongsa and the Seobu-dong area appear to have been allotted in the same manner, followed by the Seonggeon-dong and Dongcheon- dong area in the eighth century. The opening of Dongsi (East Market) in the tenth year of King Jijeung's reign (509) and of Seosi (West Market) and Namsi (South Market) in the fourth year of King Hyoso's reign (695) reported in written records indirectly confirm the direction in the progress of urban planning discussed above.

Satellite photos as well as maps of the Silla capital make it very clear that the bang were distributed across the Gyeongju basin. In the north, the planned area of the city extended to the northern shore of the Bukcheon Stream near Hwangseong-dong and Yonggang-dong, and in the southwest, to the Poseokjeong area. The easternmost bang were in the neighborhood of Myeonglhwalsan Mountain, and the southeastern-most ones were near Sacheonwangsa and Mangdeoksa Temples <Fig 5>. Silla's urban land allotment system is quite different from that of Tang China or Japan wherein





the grid plan was much more strictly implemented and higher-level units existed above the blocks. An upper unit, in the form of the ri comprising several bang, could have existed also in Silla as some historians believe. Regardless of whether they are right, the distribution pattern of bang in Silla's capital was largely determined by the fact that the city was planned around the royal palace situated at the south end of the Gyeongju basin. The pattern also suggests that urban planning took place progressively and even perhaps ad hoc in a comprehensive manner.

The surface area of Silla's capital is recorded in *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa* as 3,075 *bo* (one bo being about 1.87 cm) north to west and 3,018 bo east to west, 1,360 bang or 360 bang, and 35 *ri* or 55 ri. Moreover, 178,936 total households are said to have existed in Silla during its heyday. The structural remains of roads thus far discovered extend close to 6 km

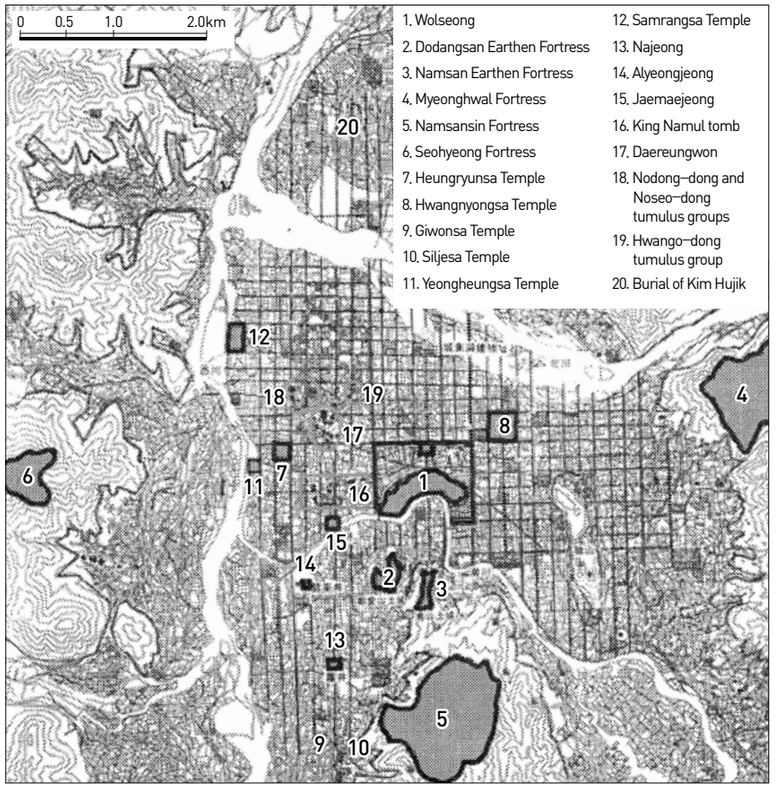



Fig 5 Old city block grid lines seen on the surface

north to south and 5.5 km east to west, offering only a rough measure of the expanse of the ancient capital city. Furthermore, both *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa* report that there were 178,936 *ho* ("households") in Gyeongju during the heyday of Silla, but it is unclear whether the number indicates households or the size of population.

Located approximately 600 m north of Wolseong in the south shore of the Bukcheon (also known as Alcheon), Jeollangji is a building site with vestiges of a corridor, roughly dating from when a large overhaul took place in the capital city. If this site was indeed part of Bukgung, the North Palace known from written records, as is widely presumed, it suggests the possibility that Silla's capital was organized according to a grid plan similar to the one used in Japan or China. However, for this hypothesis to hold true, the bang to the north of it and those lying south of Wolseong should have been residential districts that were developed in later eras as part of an urban sprawl. Meanwhile, an entry states that King Munmu wanted to have a new (outer) fortress constructed around the capital city during the twenty-second year of his reign (681), often understood to refer to a fortress project that was ultimately abandoned on monk Uisang's advice. It is possible, however, that the entry is rather about a project to implement a large-scale land allotment that was never brought to realization. Also notable in this regard are the land allotment vestiges from the Unified Silla period, located at Moryang-ri, a western section of the city somewhat removed from its center. This place could have been the residential district for people belonging to Jamtak-bu, one of Silla's six bu, and among the 1,360 bang believed to have existed during the heyday of the kingdom.

These bang have an inseparable relationship to the roads that are planned around them, and structural remains of these roads were identified in numerous archaeological sites within the ancient royal capital area. Aside from enabling transportation, roads served as the dividers for organizing the urban space into blocks of a certain size. Large roads were over 15 m wide, medium-sized roads about 10 m wide, and small-size roads 5 m wide. In the case of the aforementioned zone S1E1, the east-to-west road running by the south side of the *bang* <Fig 6> measures close to 15 m in width. The roadbed is laid with large pebbles in the middle section and with fine pebbles and sandy dirt at the edges. Judging from the location of stone edgings present at the borders, this road appears to have been divided into a vehicle path and a pedestrian path. Moreover, there are 1.4 m- to 1.45 m–





Fig 6 Close-up of the southern side of east-west road in the S1E1 Locality, Gyeongju

wide drains at either edge of the road, built with pebbles. The east-to-west road on the north side of the block, meanwhile, is significantly narrower at 5.5-7.5 m. The north-to-south road along the western edge of the block, bordering Hwangnyongsa, is close to 12 m in width, and the north-to-south road along the eastern edge about 5.5 m.

Remains of bridges that continued these roads over waterways and connected them with one another, all of which were over the Namcheon, have been also identified. The surviving remains are mostly foundations of piers and other secondary structures. Two notable examples are the Chunyanggyo (also known as Iljeonggyo) Bridge mentioned in eighth-century records and the Woljeonggyo Bridge <Fig 7>. As they are situated within the royal palace district that is presumed to have undergone expansion in the late seventh century, these two bridges might have been reserved for use by aristocrats. The foundations of the piers in a semilunar shape appear to have been designed to reduce flow resistance.

From early on, the royal capital was surrounded by mountain fortresses serving as defense structures and shelters. As discussed previously, one of these fortresses, Myeonghwalsanseong('sanseong' means mountain fortress),

Fig 7 Pier foundations of Chunyanggyo Bridge, Gyeongju

Fig 8 View of the excavations of the entrance area at Myeonghwalsanseong Fortress, Gyeongju





was constructed during the Maripgan period. Not only were all mountain fortresses of earthen construction, but they were also distributed only on the eastern and western outskirts of the Gyeongju basin. Once into the Middle Ancient period, however, a series of new fortresses was constructed, some of which were reconstructions of the existing ones in stone. Examples include Myeonghwalsanseong (now rebuilt in stone), Seohyeongsanseong, Namsansinseong, Bukhyeongsanseong, and Goheoseong. Except for Bukhyeongsanseong, all are large-stone fortresses located in mountains. There is also Busanseong, a fortress lying west of the capital city, at some distance from it. This fortress is reported in *Samguk sagi* as having been constructed in 663 (third year of King Munmu's reign). However, given that this fortress was already mentioned in the Jukjirang legend in *Samguk yusa* and the age of pottery items discovered inside it, it must have been first built during the Middle Ancient period and rebuilt subsequently in 663. Extending 7.5 km in wall circumference, this large mountain fortress has an unusual design consisting of two separate layers of walls.

As for Myeonghwalsanseong, the construction date is 551 according to its fortress stele. Based on this inscription, the fortress, originally of earthen construction, appears to have been reconstructed in stone at this date <Fig 8>. Seohyeongsanseong is built in a style known as temoe (fortress constructed in a manner to surround a mountain peak) at the mid-altitude of Mt. Seohyeongsan, or Mt. Seondosan. The reference in written records that the stone mountain fortress was reconstructed in 593 (fifteenth year of King Jinpyeong's reign) at the same time as Myeonghwalsanseong indicates that it was originally built prior to this date. By extension, it also means that along with Myeonghwalsanseong, a fortress system defending Silla's capital from its east and west sides was already in place before the reign of Jinpyeong. For example, Namsansinseong is a stone fortress built at the northern peak of Namsan Mountain, enclosing the valley beneath. This fortress replaced the existing Namsan fortress as the chief defense structure. These new additions to Silla's capital defense system further strengthened its capabilities <Fig 9>. References related to the construction of such fortresses appear in the entries from 591 (thirteenth year of King Jinpyeong's reign), corroborating the content of the epigraphs on the Namsansinseong steles, ten in total.

Later, Busanseong Fortress was rebuilt during the unification war period, and Sindaeriseong and Gwanmunseong Forresses were newly built after the unification. The reason that only two new fortresses were constructed

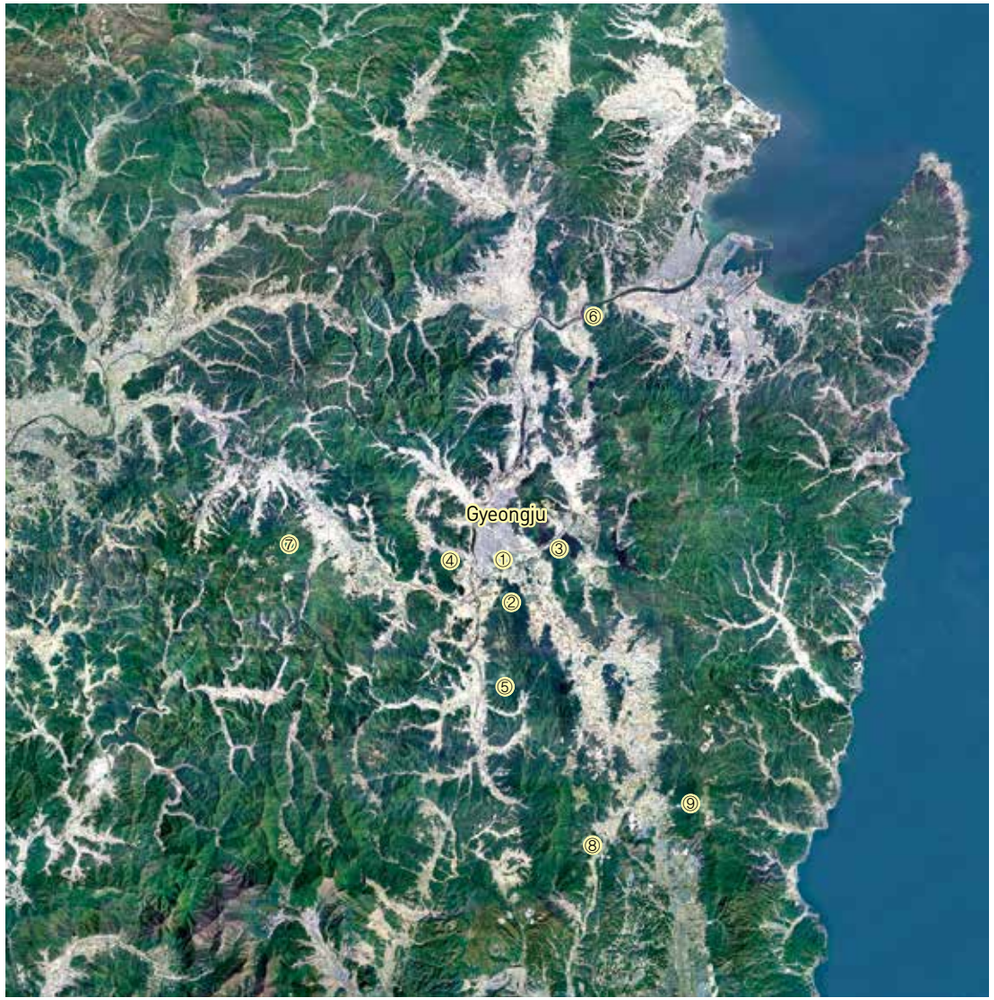



Fig 9 Defensive facilities in the vicinity of the royal capital(①palace, ②Namsansinseong Fortress, ③Myeonghwalsanseong Fortress, ④Seohyeongsanseong Fortress, ⑤goheosanseong Fortress, ⑥Bukyeongsanseong Fortress, ⑦Busanseong Fortress, ⑧Gwanmunseong Fortress, ⑨Sindae-ri Fortress)

in the Unified Silla period is that the existing fortresses, including Bukhyeongsanseong, Myeonghwalsanseong, and Seohyeongsanseong, were still intact and provided a sufficient level of defense capability for the capital city.

Gwanmunseong and Sindaeriseong were situated on the southeast side of the city at the edge of the Gyeongju basin. Located at the summit of a





Fig 10 Rubbing of the epigraph on a stone block of Sindae-ri Fortress, Gyeongju

mountain lying east of Gwanmunseong, Sindaeriseong shows extensive traces of repair and reconstruction, suggesting that it had been continuously used since its initial construction, owing in part to its strategic location for monitoring the East Coast and Ulsan Bay as an outpost to detect the first signs of invasion by the Japanese.

It is believed that Sindaeriseong was constructed before Gwanmunseong in the late seventh century as a southern defense post. Gwanmunseong seems to have been constructed later to expand the defense capability on the south side of the capital city. Ten of the stone blocks used to build the Sindaeriseong wall <Fig 10> contain inscriptions that offer insights into the measure used for construction and how the wall was divided into sections as a function of the division of labor.

Constructed in 722 (tenth month of the twenty-first year of King Seongdeok's reign), Gwanmunseong was a bulwark against Japanese attack, as was Sindaeriseong. Built to connect several mountains, this fortress is unlike many of the other Silla fortresses in design, its wall running parallel to the shoreline of the East Coast. And during Kim Heon-chang's rebellion, it proved useful for defending the southeast side of the capital city from the rebel troops.

A heavily populated area, the capital city of Silla had a hinterland area where farmland and other production facilities for supplying produce and


Fig 11 Ancient agricultural production features at Geumjang-ri, Gyeongju

Fig 12 View of the ancient site of HwangnyongsaTemple, Gyeongju





goods to its inhabitants were located. The area consisted of the various valleys that had been inhabited since the Saro-guk period and become part of the suburbs surrounding the royal capital. In places that closely bordered the capital city, there were specialized manufacture villages known as seong. Ancient sites of kilns producing pottery items and roof tiles as well as farm plots <Fig 11> in villages of this type have been identified in Cheonbuk- myeon on the northeast edge of the city, Geumjang-ri on the northwest edge, and in Hwagok-ri on the southeast edge

Aside from the palaces, the most important buildings within the capital city were Buddhist temples. The ancient sites of Hwangnyongsa and Bunhwangsa, two temples appearing in written records, have already been fully excavated, while the excavation of the Heungnyunsa site is only partially complete. Of the fully excavated sites, Hwangnyongsa (Fig 12) consisted of three worship halls and a pagoda in a style known as “one-pagoda, three-sanctuary layout.” The three worship halls were located next to the temple’s famous nine-story wooden pagoda, in the walled-in precincts that extended 280 m in both the east-to-west and north-to-south directions.

In addition, what appear to be ancient sites of a garden belonging to a park or a mansion mentioned in written records have been discovered in level land areas of Gyeongju. The ancient garden sites at Yonggang-dong and Guhwang-dong are the two most representative examples. The Yonggang-dong site is situated in the level area lying north of the Bukcheon just outside the planned city section. Only about one half of this lot, longer in the north-to-south direction (estimated to be more than 100 m long), has been excavated for the time being (Fig 13). Structural remains uncovered at this place include building sites, two manmade islands with a stone retaining wall around the edge (the retaining walls of both islands have a combined length of 236 m), an irrigation channel, a water inlet, and landscaping rocks, along with bridges, roads, and ditches. Built with hewn, crushed stone, and flagstone, the retaining walls combine straight lines and curves for a look that is simple yet naturally elegant. Moreover, the existence of a wooden bridge to connect the building on the shore to the manmade islands distinguishes this garden from Anapji, for example. Constructed in the late seventh century, the garden site appears to have been used mainly during the eighth century.

The garden site of Guhwang-dong is on the southern shore of the Bukcheon Stream, located east of Bunhwangsa. The remains of a pond,

Fig 13 Ancient garden site at Yonggang-dong, Gyeongju

Fig 14 Ancient garden site at Guhwang-dong, Gyeongju





irrigation channel, drain, an S-shaped water duct, and an octagonal building site have been identified there (Fig 14). During the initial period, presumed to be sometime in the mid-seventh century, the pond existed along with the S-shaped aqueduct and the retaining wall. During the later period, sometime in the mid-eighth century, the pond existed together with the retaining wall that was constructed later, a catchment well, and a small drain. The pond is close to 46.3 m in north-south diameter, and the stone retaining wall 192 m in length, which is about one fifteenth the size of Anapji Pond. Inside the pond, two manmade islands are placed next to each other, in much the same way as the pond at the Yonggang-dong garden site.

## Cities outside the Capital Area

When the unification wars came to an end in 676 with the withdrawal of the Tang troops, Silla immediately proceeded with the reform of its local administrative structure, creating nine *ju* and five *sogyeong*. According to *Samguk sagi*, Sabeolju (Sangju), Samnyangju (Yangju), and Cheongju (Gangju) were set up in areas that used to belong to Silla and Gaya during the Three Kingdoms Period. In former Baekje territory, Eungcheonju (Ungju), Wansanju (Jeonju) and Mujinju (Muju) were created, and in former Goguryeo territory, Hansanju (Hanju), Usuju (Sakju) and Haseoju (Myeongju). Cities that were the political and cultural centers of their respective areas were given new status as *sogyeong*. The five *sogyeong* were Jungwonsogyeong (Jungwongyeong), Geumgwansogyeong (Geumgwangyeong), Seowonsogyeong (Seowongyeong), and Namwonsogyeong (Namwongyeong), as shown in <Fig 15>. Fortresses were also constructed in each of the ju and *sogyeong*.

Along with the administrative division of territory, the grid plan used in the royal capital appears to have been applied also to secondary capitals, or *sogyeong*. However, no evidence providing concrete details of the structure of local cities is currently available; some traces of urban planning seen in maps or captured in satellite or aerial photos and a small amount of excavation results constitute the bulk of the evidence.

In 687 (seventh year of King Sinmun's reign), a grid plan seems to have been implemented in Sabeolju, an area that corresponds to the town center of today's Sangju. Based on what we currently know from excavation results, written records, and cadastral maps, Salbeolju might have been


Fig 15 Nine provinces and five secondary capitals





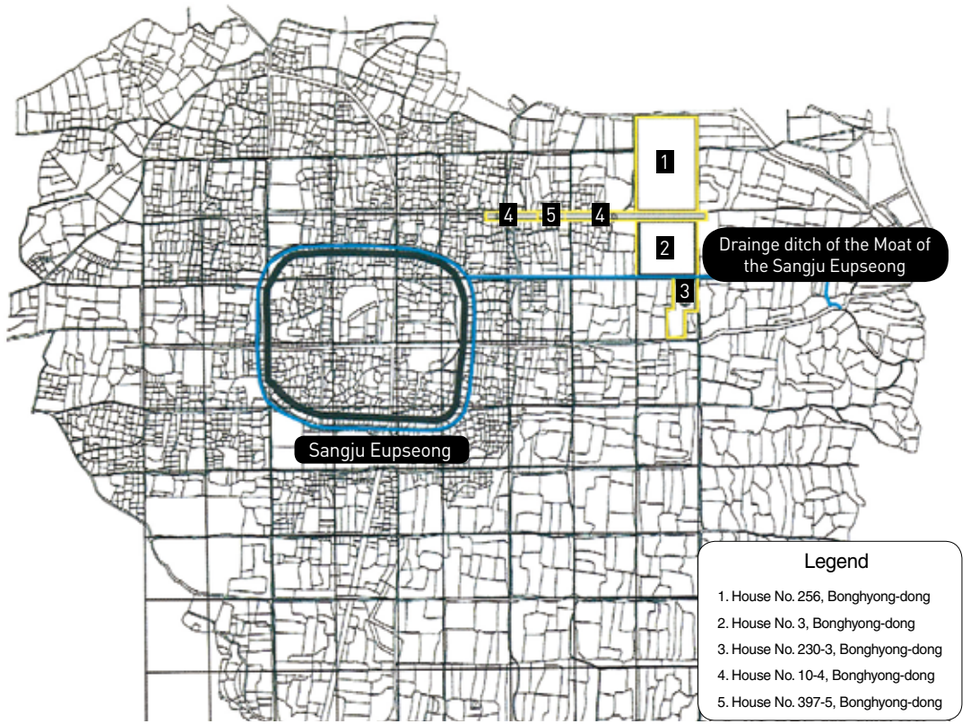



Fig 16 Layout of Sabeolju

divided into nine large districts, each of which was again divided into nine smaller units. If such was the case, the large blocks correspond to the ri, and the small blocks to the bang. Thus, a nine-by-nine grid was used to divide an area extending close to 1,440 m north to south and 1,400 m east to west to create nine ri and eight-one bang <Fig 16>.

By consulting a cadastral map dating from 1930, recording a landscape that is closer to that during the Unified Silla period than today's maps, we are able to produce more precise estimates of the size of the bang and more accurately guess their shape. The *bang* in the middle column are rectangular, measuring close to 120 m east to west and 160 m north to south. The *bang* in the rest of the columns are square in shape, measuring about 160 m by 160 m. In other words, the bang 120 m wide were in the middle, and all other bang in the four columns in the east and four in the west were square, measuring 160 m per side. Hence, during the Unified

Silla period, Sangju consisted of a central section in a grid plan, with the outskirts ringing this central section and Jasansanseong Mountain Fortress behind it. The only urban structural remains from the Unified Silla period discovered thus far in this area are those at Bongnyong-dong.

Formerly Goryong-gun County of Baekje, Namwonsogyeong was fiercely fought over. Since the mid-sixth century, around the time Gaya fell to Silla, Silla and Baekje troops clashed over this city on Unbong Plateau on the east side of it. After the unification wars ended with Silla emerging victorious, Namwonsogyeong was set up there in 685 (fifth year of King Sinmun's reign), and households from various places nearby were relocated there. Shortly thereafter, Namwonseong Fortress was constructed in 691 (eleventh year of Sinmun's reign). Namwonsogyeong was located in an area corresponding to the downtown section of today's Namwon, comprising Hyanggyo-dong, Dongchung-dong, Dotong-dong, Wangjeong-dong, and Jukhang-dong. Vestiges of the roads and city blocks showing a precise grid plan have been identified, along with those of Namwon's town fortress.

The planned area of the city is close to 1.12 km north to south and 1.36 km east to west. Except for those in the middle column, most city blocks are square in shape, measuring approximately 160 m by 160 m. The blocks belonging to the central column, on the other hand, are in the shape of a vertically long rectangle, measuring approximately 80 m east to west and 160 m north to south. No noteworthy urban remains from the Unified Silla period have been discovered thus far except the Yongseonggwan site. The ancient site of this building constructed in 691 (eleventh year of Sinmun's reign) is located in the environs of Yongseong Elementary School, where some vestiges of the city block have survived. However, it is unclear what type of building Yongseonggwan was. During the Joseon Dynasty, King Taejo's memorial tablet was housed in this building, which was also used as a guesthouse. Near the city block lying east of it is Seonwonsa, a Buddhist temple constructed in 875 (first year of King Heongang's reign), and Manboksa, a Goryeo temple, lies west of it. During the Joseon Dynasty, Namwoneupseong (Namwon Town Fortress) was built around it with a square plan. This suggests that after Namwonsogyeong became a planned city, it continued to serve as the center of the area well into the Goryeo and the Joseon Dynasties; its grid-like road network was probably used during the construction of the town fortress and roads in later eras.





2

# Royal Tombs

Of the wooden chamber tombs of the Saro-guk period thus far discovered that date from the mid-second century onward, none was grand enough in scale or furnished with noticeably sumptuous grave goods to appear to be a king's tomb. In fact, no tomb in the entire Yeongnam region can compare to Sara- ri tomb No. 130 dating from the late first century; Tap-dong wooden chamber tomb <Fig 17>, dating from roughly the same time period, is presumed to contain the remains of a person belonging to a different village. However, nothing is certain beyond the fact that both of these tombs belong to the chiefs or at least important individuals of their respective village communities.

During the Maripgan period, members of the ruling elite of Silla whose main base was the area east of the Nakdonggang River moved to the Gyeongju area. These elites had large burial mounds built in the center of the level

Fig 17 Tomb of Tap-dong

land area of today's Gyeongju and in Geumcheok-ri as their postmortem dwellings, so the tombs of Maripgan-period rulers must also be among these large burial mounds. Meanwhile, there is little likelihood that any of the tombs in Geumcheok-ri belong to a king, as this tumulus group, located at some distance from the tumulus group in the center of the capital city, is presumed to contain the remains of the members of Jamtak-bu, a weaker and less influential one of Silla's six political divisions known as the six bu. In this period, the chief of the most powerful of the six bu ascended the throne. Takbu and Satakbu, for example, were the two most prominent bu. Although no information is available to date to allow the identification of these tombs in Geumcheok-ri according to their affiliation to a political base, the pattern of clustering suggests that tombs belonging to the members of Tak-bu and Satak-bu, the two most powerful bu, are highly likely to be in the Daereungwon area as well as the Nodong-dong and and Noseo-dong areas lying further north <Fig 19>. If such conjecture holds true, tombs of Maripgan-period kings must also be among the tombs in these two areas.

What the royal tomb markers were during the Maripgan period cannot be clearly established based on the excavation results alone. Some researchers have attributed tombs containing gold crowns with trident-like uprights <Fig 18> to six kings, Namul, Silseong, Nulji, Jabi, Soji, and Jijeung, based on their estimated date of construction. However, a gold crown is by no means a

Fig 18 Tombs from which gold crowns have been excavated in Daereungwon and Noseo/Nodong-dong in Gyeongju (①North tomb, Hwangnamdaechong, ②Cheonmachong, ③Geumgwanchong, ④Seobongchong, ⑤Geumryeongchong)




completely reliable mark of a king's tomb. Furthermore, there are still burial mounds that have yet to be excavated, many of which far exceed in scale those tombs containing gold crowns. There are nine tombs that are far greater in size than Cheonmachong, as listed in <Table 1> below.

**<Table 1> Large burial mounds in Gyeongju in the order of size**

| Classification No. (Name) | Diameter (m) | Classification No. (Name) | Diameter (m) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No. 125 (Bonghwangdae) | 82.3 | No. 119 (west tomb) | 53.7 |
| No. 98 (south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong ) | 76.0 | No. 119 (middle tomb) | 48.9 |
| No. 98 (north tomb of Hwangnamdaechong ) | 76.0 | No. 119 (east tomb) | 42.3 |
| No. 130 (Seobonghwangdae) | 74.6 | No. 99 | 51.2 |
| No. 90 (north tomb) | 56.5 | No. 105 | 51.0 |
| No. 90 (south tomb) | 54.3 | No. 155 (Cheonmachong) | 49.6 |
| No. 106 (formerly attributed to King Michu) | 56.1 | No. 129 (north tomb: Seobongchong) | 46.1 |
| No. 134 (north tomb) | 54.1 | No. 97 (west tomb) | 45.5 |
| No. 134 (south tomb) | 44.0 | No. 97 (east tomb) | 38.0 |

Based purely on the size, tomb No. 98, the largest of tombs thus far excavated, should be a king's tomb. If so, there might be a strong likelihood that tombs with two mounds like No. 98 contain the remains of a king in one of them. On the other hand, a queen's tomb that is not paired with another mound containing the remains of her husband does not have to be impressive in size. Based on this reasoning, tombs that have a strong potential to be a king's tomb are No. 90 and No. 134 <Table 1>. Furthermore, No. 125 and No. 130, the largest tombs with single mounds, are a fortiori kings' tombs. The second essential criterion is a more obvious one: the tomb must belong to a man. The sex of the owner of a Gyeongju tomb is usually determined by the style of earrings worn by the dead. It is believed that thin-loop earrings were worn by men and thick-loop earrings by women. In Geumgwanchong, for instance, thick-loop earrings were recovered, but numerous details of this excavation are missing, as it was carried out during the colonial period. Based on the type of earrings excavated in conjunction with its relatively small scale, Geumgwanchong is highly unlikely to be a king's tomb.

From the results of excavation thus far conducted, it seems possible that tombs containing gold crowns, whether the crowns were ceremonial headdresses


Fig 19 Distribution of tombs around Noseo-dong, Nodong-dong, and Daereungwon, Gyeongju

actually worn by the deceased while living or made as grave goods, indeed belonged to kings. An exception to this rule is the south tomb of No. 98 (Hwangnamdaechong). This tomb of gigantic proportions is almost certainly a king's tomb. However, no gold crown was discovered inside it, whereas one was found in the north tomb, presumed to be his queen's. There is no ready answer to why the king was inhumed without a gold crown; though the dominant view is that the south tomb of Hwangnamdaechong belongs to either King Namul or King Nulji, some historians understand it as that of King Silseong.

All in all, no definitive characteristics that can identify a royal tomb of the Maripgan period have emerged from archaeological research. Rather than being assigned separate locations, kings' tombs appear to have been constructed among other big and small tombs in the Gyeongju area. More specifically, they were built at the burial sites for the elite of the bu to which they belonged, indicating that during the Maripgan period, a king was still more of a representative of his bu than an overarching authority rising above these political clans.

It was in the Middle Ancient Period that a Silla king at last shed the mold





Fig 20 Tombs near King Muyeol's tomb, Gyeongju (tomb at the bottom of the photo, surrounded by trees)

of the chief of a bu to become a bona-fide monarch. The king started to be referred to as "Daewang," the honorific term meaning "Great King," and the royal family took on a distinct and elevated status. It is also around this period that the mention of a royal burial site, such as the site lying north of Yeonggyeongsa Temple, start to appear in *Samguk sagi*. Moreover, tombs of kings and aristocrats started being built in various mountains at the outskirts of Gyeongju, instead of the level land area inside it shortly after the inauguration of the Middle Ancient Period. One such tumulus group that deserves particular attention is the row of tombs behind the tomb of King Muyeol, the first ruler of the Middle Period <Fig 20>.

The tomb closest to King Muyeol's tomb (tomb No. 4) measures up to 62.9 m in diameter when estimated based on the trajectory of the retaining stone slabs. The plan of the burial mound, meanwhile, is not circular as in stone chamber tombs with a side entrance from the later period; instead, it is in the shape of an ellipse as are Maripgan-period tombs. As such, this tomb is highly likely to be a stone-covered wooden chamber tomb. Tombs No. 3, 2 and 1, lying farther away, measure 50.3 m, 46.2 m, and 46.0 m in diameter, respectively. Given their hefty size as well as other details, it is unquestionable that these tombs belonged to kings. Tomb No. 4, the oldest of them, belonged probably to King Beopheung; King Jinheung and King Jinji must have been the owners of two of the three other tombs.

As *Samguk sagi* records that the tombs of King Jinpyeong and Queen

Fig 21 Pedestal and dragon capstone of King Muyeol's tomb, Gyeongju

Fig 22 Horse zodiac depiction of the Twelve Zodiac Animals on the Tomb of King Heungdeok, Gyeongju

Jindeok are in Hanjibu and Saryangbu respectively, we know that the tombs of these two rulers were in a level land area, if nothing else. As for the tomb of Queen Seondeok, it could be the lone tomb at the southern foot of Nangsan Mountain, situated north of Sacheonwangsa Temple.

What we can gather is that during the Middle Ancient Period, people started to build kings' tombs in areas separate from the aristocrats' tombs in a manner that befits their status because by this period, they were considered sacred. Later, however, some kings' tombs were constructed in locations outside this royal burial site. Such shift is a clear reflection of the growing power enjoyed by Silla's monarchs.

The tomb of King Muyeol whose reign inaugurated the Middle Period is a rare example of a king's tomb whose location is clearly known, thanks to the inscription on the dragon-carved capstone of the grave stele. An admirable work of sculpture, this stele is also an important piece of evidence indicating that the Tang-Dynasty custom of building grave steles had spread at last to Silla <Fig 21>.

Many of the tombs that have been attributed to Silla kings of the Middle and Late Periods are found scattered at the outskirts of the Gyeongju basin at a distance from the center of the city. However, it is doubtful that these tombs actually belonged to kings, as the belief was forged by members of Gyeongju-based family clans in the early eighteenth century, claims backed by little proof. For example, the discovery of a burial urn inside the cremation





Fig 23 Stone sculptures at the graveyard of King Wonseong, Gyeongju

tomb that had been attributed to King Minae proved that the tomb in fact did not belong to him. This urn was carved with the date, tenth year of Wonhwa (815): King Minae died more than two decades later in 839. Aside from King Muyeol's tomb, a handful of other tombs that are clearly established to belong to a Silla ruler include King Heungdeok's (824-836), which has a grave stele indicating its owner, and King Wonseong's (785-798), identified through information found on the Sungboksa temple stele.

These tombs believed to contain kings' remains tend to have retaining stone slabs around the mound that are sculpted with the Twelve Zodiac Animals and be belted around by stone parapets. They are also fronted by stone sculptures representing people and animals like the lion <Fig 23>, elements that are found in the most complete variants of royal tombs. An early example of the use of retaining stone slabs for royal tombs is the retaining wall of King Muyeol's tomb that is built with irregularly-shaped stones supported by stone props. An example of the next stage is provided by King Sinmun's tomb <Fig 24> in which the retaining wall was built with rectangular stone blocks, and the structure was reinforced by supports made of hewn stone. This stage was followed by a retaining wall built with stone slabs, and only in the final stage of evolution were the bas-reliefs of the Twelve Zodiac Animals added. One tomb that appears to have been built immediately prior to the final stage where the bas- reliefs were added is the one attributed to King Seongdeok (r. 702-737). This tomb with a stone slab-built retaining wall at its base is surrounded by free- standing sculptures of the Twelve Zodiac Animals. It is believed that these sculptures were added sometime after the creation of the tomb itself, possibly during King Gyeongdeok's reign.

Fig 24 Tomb of King Sinmun, Gyeongju

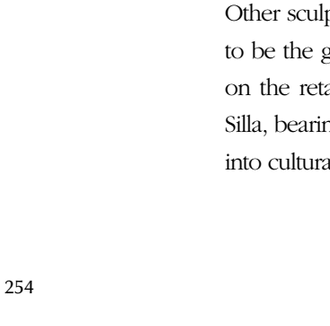


Fig 25 Urn with Twelve Zodiac Animal inscription

The twelve zodiac figures originate in China. The clay figurines of animals with a human body, representing the twelve directions-the ox for the north, hare for the east, horse for the south, and the rooster for the west-made during the Sui dynasty are the earliest examples. The custom of interring these figures in graves continued to be prevalent through to the Tang Dynasty and was eventually transmitted to Silla where the zodiac figures were carved on the retaining wall of tombs. In Silla, Zodiac figures were also represented as painted clay figures or bronze figures, as exemplified by the famous figurines of the Yonggang-dong stone chamber tomb. In the case of the cremation tomb of Hwagok-ri, flat clay figurines representing the twelve Zodiac animals were placed around the urn. Moreover, the twelve Zodiac names were found in a variety of objects, carved onto the lid of urn <Fig 25> or cast on the surface of calibration weights. It is probable that there was a sort of cult involving the twelve Zodiac figures in Silla, given the many reminders of them among surviving artifacts.

Originally used as grave goods in China, the twelve Zodiac figures were featured on the exterior retaining wall of tombs in Silla, most often clad in armor suits. The twelve Zodiac figures, therefore, appear to have taken on the role of the guardians of the dead similar to the Guardian Gods in Buddhism, in addition to symbolizing permanence in time, which was their original function. Other sculptures outside Silla's royal tombs such as the lion statues were meant to be the guardians of the eternal sleep of the king. The twelve Zodiac figures on the retaining wall are an important characteristic of the royal tombs from Silla, bearing witness to the creativity of its people who infused their own colors into cultural elements that were brought from the outside world.





3

# Religions and Rituals

Aside from Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism were also transmitted to Silla from China. However, Confucianism is closer to a system of thought than a belief system with a faith-based following. Meanwhile, no evidence exists as to whether Taoism ever attained a system of doctrines or ritual acts needed to function as a religion in Silla society. Therefore, the discussion in this section will be limited to Buddhism and native faiths that predate the arrival of Buddhism as well as related state rituals.

## Native Faiths

All human societies possess a system of ideas and beliefs that allow their members to understand who they are and what the outside world surrounding them resembles. These systems are sometimes referred to as worldviews, and religions are certainly a part of them. Early inhabitants of the southeastern Korean peninsula that later became part of Silla also had their own system of religious thinking. These home-grown religions were driving forces in early Silla and later evolved into different forms as this society developed. With the introduction of Buddhism, a more universal form of religion brought from the outside world, the native faiths evolved together with and in relationship to it, maintaining their relevance by

meeting different levels of religious needs.

The larger background to native faiths in ancient Korea is provided by shamanism. Shamanism refers to a religious and cultural practice involving a shaman, a practitioner who communicates with the world of spirits. Shamans were known in ancient China as "*wu* (巫)." A kind of religious specialist, shamans seek answers to human problems by interacting with the spirit world, in an altered state of consciousness in the form of a trance or dissociation. Shamanism is a faith-based culture deriving from the worldview framing such a religious practice.

People of ancient Korean societies believed in the ability of special individuals like shamans to communicate with spirits through the journey of the soul and thus solve problems in the human world. As such, shamans were revered and played an important role in Silla and other ancient societies of the Korean peninsula. Shamanistic abilities were, for instance, an important element in the seizing and exercising of power in the early stage of the formation of nation-states. Like King Namhae, the second ruler of Silla who gave himself the title "Chachaung (shaman)," any early rulers were perceived as possessing shamanistic abilities and were expected to utilize such abilities. This status of the shaman-king is confirmed in numerous written records.

To understand the native religious beliefs and ideas of Silla people, we must first understand their perception of the world and its organization. What emerges from the myth of Dangun as well as other myths of the Korean peninsula is that ancient Koreans viewed the world as a place for a harmonious coexistence between human beings and all living things composing the natural environment. They believed that human beings could attain happiness only through exchange and harmony with various different worlds. Such a worldview indeed shares a great deal with the shamanistic worldview.

Aside from a vertically conceived system of worlds consisting of heaven, earth, and the underworld belonging to the dead-which was also believed to be the source of primal abundance and vitality-the people of Silla had a horizontal conception of the world in which more worlds lay beyond their own world. Moreover, they held a conception of time derived from the lunar cycles and used various symbols representing the cycles of waning and waxing of the moon.

Much like other ancient peoples, people of Silla also viewed the human soul as a separate entity from the body and believed that the soul continued





to exist after death in another sphere of the universe. For them, the human body was inhabited by two types of soul: the bodily soul and the free soul that leaves the body upon death to another world. Such view is reflected in many customs related to the handling of the body of the deceased.

Silla people also supposed the existence of various different gods that rule over and regulate the world. Of these various gods, the highest and most revered by people of Silla was the god of the heavens. The power and authority of a monarch, for instance, was considered to be a derivative of this supreme authority. More specifically, they believed that the power of the heavens was delegated to rulers of the earthly world through the ancestral god. For this reason, the god of the heavens and the ancestral god were at times indistinguishable in Silla people's minds. Likewise, gods were imagined to have the same attributes as those of ancestors or other departed persons. In addition to the ancestral god vested with divine characteristics, important personalities who played notable roles in society during their lifetime were believed to become guardian gods upon death, continuously influencing the world of the living. Meanwhile, mountain gods were considered to be part of the strategic regional defense systems in Silla. Mountain gods were of great sociopolitical significance as key elements in the organizational framework for local forces. Silla people also believed that various gods were responsible for farming and industrial productivity in their society. Since prehistoric times, women and water had symbolized abundance and productivity. In Silla, they were raised to a divine status, hence the various goddesses and water gods.

These beliefs underlay and fed the many religious rituals performed in Silla. The main types of rituals observed by people of Silla included mountain, well, farming, and fishing rites. Well rites were the only exception to this rule because wells were associated with the power of the monarch, giving rise to the conjecture that the coronation of a king took place at a well. Since water was a symbol of life, purification rites were held with water as the medium. Seafaring rites were also frequently observed to pray to sea gods for the safety of fishermen and maritime traders as well as for an abundant catch.

Concerning well rites, the remains of a well discovered in a corner of the lot of the Gyeongju National Museum merit attention. The well is over 10 m in depth, and at approximately 8.5 m underground, skeletal remains of a child aged ten at most were recovered along with a large quantity of animal bones. Mammal bones including those of dogs, cats, oxen, warthogs,

Fig 26 Well in a corner of Gyeongju National Museum

deer, elk and horses were found alongside crow, duck and pheasant bones as well as mackerel, sea bream, and croaker bones. The well remains also yielded a well bucket, stamped pottery items, and roof-tiles. Of particular note are the roof-tiles with the inscription *Namgung(South Palace)*, which raised the possibility that this was the location of the South Palace of Wolseong and that the well rite held there was closely connected to the king. Given the animal remains and pottery items accompanying the skeletal remains of the child, he or she was probably not a drowning victim, but was likely sacrificed along with the animals, a real possibility in the context of a state-level well rite <Fig 26>.

## State Rituals

It is well known that in early human societies, primitive religious faiths and collective rituals played a major role in communal cohesion. With the emergence of ancient nation-states, heir rulers also held religious rites as





part of the effort to consolidate centralized rule while organizing beliefs on which these rites were based into a coherent system of ideas. This process had taken place since early in ancient China, where rites were classified according to their political and social importance, and a state-level code of rituals was put into place.

Organizing and standardizing state rituals was also a critical part of building a central monarchy in Silla. A preliminary code of rituals was completed in Silla during King Jijeung's reign. Later, there was a renewed interest in rituals as a means of supporting new governing instruments and institutions during the Middle Ancient Period, in the context of reforming the systems for ruling the country, As such, the code of national rituals was overhauled at this time. Another overhaul occurred at the end of the Middle Period, bringing it in line with the transformed society. The re-organization of the royal ancestral shrine during King Hyegong's rule and the setting up of the altar to state gods during Queen Seondeok's rule were part of this reform. The ritual section of *Samguk sagi* provides the summary of the earlier code of rituals, offering a general outline of the system in place in Silla. *Samguk sagi* recounts that ancestral rites, including rites for the ancestral gods, farming rites, and mountain rites, as well as folk and good-fortune rituals held inside the royal capital, were selected as state rites. This indicates the importance of religious rituals and beliefs for the people of Silla.

Rituals for ancestral gods were considered vital for the symbolism of the state and for the continuity of the royal house. Silla's ruling class was composed of members of various different groups with opposing political interests. To ensure the stability of the regime, rituals dedicated to common ancestral gods, serving as the common denominators for all factions, were of prime importance.

As for the site where the worship of ancestral gods took place, Najeong in Gyeongju is currently the most promising candidate. According to written records, Najeong is the birthplace of Park Hyeokgeose, one of the ancestors of the kingdom of Silla. The excavation of this site identified multiple archaeological layers formed during three different periods ranging from the Saro-guk period to the late seventh century. Notably, the second layer dating from the late sixth century coincides with the site of an unusual, octagonally-shaped building that was built during King Munmu's reign. This octagonal building site has a two-tier platform made of hewn granite, and

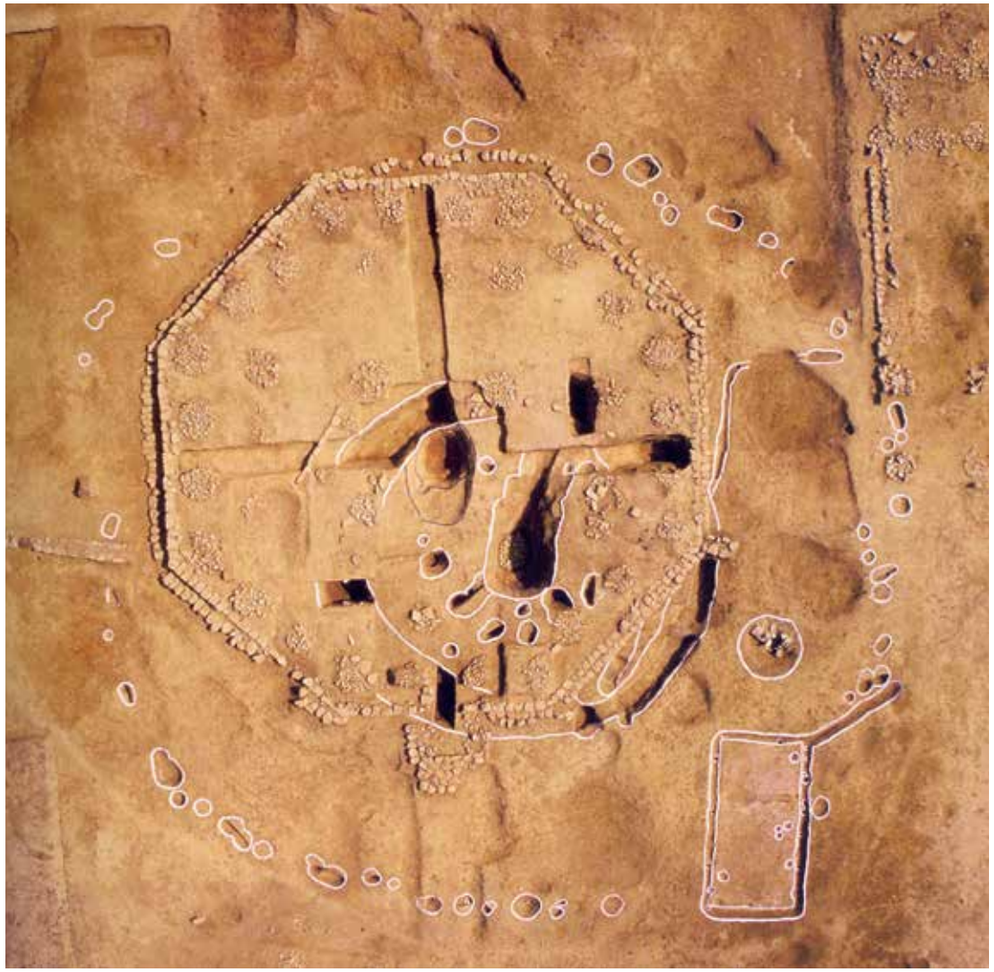


Fig 27 View of the excavation of the Najeong Well site, Gyeongju

the yard is surrounded by an exterior wall, with an arcade situated near the south entrance. Given the special architecture of the building, there is a strong likelihood that it was a worship facility.

Meanwhile, as the power and influence of the royal family grew stronger, it became necessary to establish a protocol for rituals for deceased direct-line royal kinsmen to underline the elevated status of royals above aristocrats. Various different forms of worship were adopted since the Middle Ancient Period for deceased direct-line members of the royal family.





Fig 28 Aerial photo of the building feature at House No. 123-2, Hwangnam-dong, on the south side of Cheomseongdae (left to the center of the photo)

After the unification of the Three Kingdoms, the royal ancestral shrine was set up following the Tang-Dynasty custom. As a result, royal ancestral worship events became much more stately, majestic, and formal.

The ancestral shrine of Silla's royal family is presumed to have been located at today's House No. 123-2, Hwangnam-dong, situated south of Cheomseongdae and north of Gyerim Forest. This site is believed to date mainly from the late seventh century. The building that once stood at this place closely neighboring Wolseong, the central section of Silla's capital city, appears to have been quite grand, judging from the surviving roof beams which measure nearly one meter in diameter of cross-section. It also differs from regular government buildings in layout and the positions of cornerstones. Not quite due north from Wolseong, this site tilts slightly toward west, hence situated northwest of Wolseong. This is the correct position for a royal ancestral shrine in relation to the capital city, as confirmed by the layouts of Luoyang, the capital city of the Northern Wei, and of Xian, the capital city of Tang China.

Because Silla was an agrarian economy, the amount of yearly crop yield

was an extremely important factor on which its very survival depended, giving birth to various farming rituals that were fervently observed. While most of these rituals were homegrown, some integrated Chinese elements that endowed further sophistication and symbolic breadth. Meanwhile, mountain and river rites held in honor of guardian gods of various areas including the capital city were classified into large, medium-size, and small rites in the process of building institutions for a central monarchy. By so doing, the central government classified its various provinces and towns according to their power and influence. The rites were therefore closely related to the practice of dividing the territory into administrative units such as counties and townships.

## Buddhism

As the three kingdoms strove to build a strong nation-state under the authority of a powerful monarch, their rulers were keenly interested in Buddhism. They actively embraced it in the hope of making this advanced system of ideas into the ideological foundations of their states. The Buddhism that was transmitted to the Korean peninsula during the Three Kingdoms Period in the fourth century was Chinese Buddhism, a variant of Buddhism resulting from interaction with Chinese culture. In Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla, however, the ways in which Buddhism was interpreted and gained ground were quite distinct. In Goguryeo and Baekje, for example, Buddhism brought from the Southern and Northern Dynasties was embraced in the late fourth century. In Silla, on the other hand, Buddhism was adopted significantly later, in 528 (fifteen year of King Beopheung's rule) following the martyrdom of Ichadon.

### Buddhism in the Middle Ancient Period

To strengthen his rule over Silla's territory, King Beopheung implemented reforms in local administrative systems as well as the central government. Furthermore, he adopted Buddhism as the state religion, thus matching new governing systems with an equally advanced ideological system; Buddhism helped establish the new concept of the nation-state in a period rife with social changes and contributed to forging the perception of the monarch as a sacred and supreme ruler. It also brought a wide array of cultural goods and institutions from China, allowing major strides in cultural development in Silla.

The concept of *chakravarti-raja*, or the wheel-turning sage king who unifies the world and rules with justice, was widely accepted at this time as the image of an ideal ruler, replacing the previous concept of *seongwang*, the sacred monarch. The title and name of the king was also changed into Buddhist-style ones. King Beopheung and King Jinheung entered priesthood on a temporary basis in a practice known as sasin, or abandoning of the body. In their later years, these two rulers formally entered priesthood. In addition, King Jinheung was always accompanied by a monk during his tour of borderland regions and held Buddhist seminars and rites such as the *Baekgojwaganghoe* and *Palgwanhoe*. By the reign of King Jinpyeong, Buddhism had veritably established itself as the central ideology of Silla society. Around this time, the monk Wongwang traveled to China to study Buddhism, and others, like Anham, were also sent to China to broaden their understanding of Buddha's teachings.

Upon his return from the Jin and the Sui, Wongwang drafted *Sesokogye* [Five Commandments for Laymen], which promoted Confucian ethics, providing much-needed guidelines for ethical conduct in Silla society. Furthermore, he presided over the Baekgojawbeophoe seminar held at Hwangnyongsa Temple. The Baekgojawbeophoe was a seminar on the Diamond Sutra, hosted to defend the country from enemy invasions or natural disasters such as fire or flood, and attended by some one hundred monks. In such a way, Wongwang dedicated his entire life to spreading the teachings of Buddha to people of all walks of Silla society from the king to persons of the lowliest social stations.

The monk Jajang, who also went to study Buddhism in China during Queen Seondeok's time, contributed to cementing closer ties between Silla and the Tang Dynasty and brought back with him the Tripitaka, thus providing Silla Buddhism with a solid base for future development. In charge of maintaining discipline in the Buddhist clergy, he established a code of conduct to be followed by monks. Jajang is also known as the proponent of the theory of the Buddha Land that situated Silla as the current residence of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. The nine-story wooden pagoda of Hwangnyongsa Temple, an edifice constructed to consolidate the authority of the royal house and thwart enemy invasions, is a physical manifestation of such theory.

The newly built Buddhist temples in the capital city were open to all in the kingdom. As the direct exchange with China subsequently increased with more monks traveling there, the number of Buddhist temples and pagodas also rose. In accordance with the Buddha Land theory, seven temples were constructed to house the seven Buddhas of the past, and numerous other sites sacred to the Buddha were set up across the capital to clearly illuminate the city as the Pure Land of Buddha. The seven temples were Heungnyunsa, Dameomsa, Yeongheungsa, Hwangnyongsa, Bunhwangsa, Yeongmyosa, and Sacheonwangsa, all of them located in the central section of the royal capital. Built in places that were considered sacred from before the arrival of Buddhism, these seven temples remained important venues throughout Silla until its final years. These places also served as important locations in urban planning and defense.

### Buddhism in the Middle Period

As education and scholarship flourished during the Middle Period, the efflorescence also resulted in the accumulation of a considerable body of knowledge in Buddhist philosophy. The doctrine of Seomnon promulgated most notably by Wongwang and Jajang, Bodeok's Ilseung doctrine, and Hyegong's Banyagongwan doctrine are some of the systems of thought that helped elevate Buddhist studies of this period to the next level of maturity and lay a solid foundation for future Korean Buddhism. This pursuit of an in-depth understanding of Buddhist philosophy was accompanied by various initiatives to bring Buddha's teachings into concrete actions in areas touching the practical life of Silla society.

However, Buddhist thought in Silla found its most adept expounder in Wonhyo. Wonhyo's position is characterized first and foremost by his doctrine of Hwajaeng, literally meaning remediation of disputes and reconciliation. In his *Hwaeomgyeongso* [Annotations to the Avatamsaka Sutra], Wonhyo articulates the basic tenet of his own system of thought, establishing the fundamental framework of Silla Buddhism. Aside from his dedication to Buddhist education and scholarship, Wonhyo was also keenly concerned with enlightening the masses with Buddha's teachings. An impassioned popularizer of Buddhism, he personally visited the uneducated and the poor to preach Buddhist precepts to them.

The monk Woncheuk proposed a new consciousness-only doctrine intended to reconcile the differences between the old and new





Consciousness-only schools, the two currents of East Asian Buddhist thought that were sharply opposed to each other. Woncheuk's doctrine was later kept alive by monks of subsequent generations like Dojeung and Daehyeon. Subsequently, a string of other prominent Consciousness-only Buddhist thinkers including Gyenghyang appeared, making this school of thought one of the main axes of Silla Buddhism in the late seventh century. This school had two branches: the Daehyeon school, whose defining characteristic was the cult of Maitreya, and the Amitabha and the Jinpyo school, whose followers were devotees of Maitreya and Ksitigarbha.

The monk Uisang was a pioneer in the Huayan school of Buddhism in Silla. Huayan Buddhism forwarded a doctrine that was the synthesis of all major schools of thought and emphasized harmony and unity. Emphasis was also placed on the so-called original Buddha-hood, meaning that all sentient beings could achieve enlightenment without resorting to radical or special means. A noteworthy effect of the Huayan school is that the equality maintained among members of the order contributed to social stability in Silla. Transcripts of seminars made by student monks allowed scholarly debates to be revisited and continued, so that progress could be made in learning in a consistent manner. Monks who were mentored by the founding members of the Huayan order, known as the Ten Disciples, subsequently created the Ten Huayan Temples in various areal centers throughout the kingdom. Hwaeomsa, Buseoksa, and Haeinsa are the best-known examples.

Silla Buddhism was significantly influenced by esoteric Buddhism. Early esoteric Buddhism, which was introduced in Silla during the Middle Ancient Period, directly addressed basic human desires such as desires to ward off calamities and usher in good fortune. Esoteric Buddhism also influenced healing practices of this period. The Sutra of the Medicine Buddha, for example, was popularly consulted for treatment of diseases. In contrast, although it retained its roots in early esoteric Buddhism, esoteric Buddhism of the Middle Period stressed enlightenment, the fundamental goal of this religion. Wongwang, Anhong, and Milbon were prominent monks who were pioneers of esoteric Buddhism in Silla. Esoteric Buddhism later developed into two separate branches, with one focused primarily on national defense and the other on healing. On a related note, placing the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* inside a pagoda became widely popular as a prayer for good fortune starting in King Seongdeok's reign.

By the early seventh century, the numbers of stone Buddhas and

temples in Silla had grown to a substantial level, an indication of the growth of the affluent class with means to make donations and offerings to Buddhist temples. The interest and the accompanying economic support the state, royal family, and aristocrats bore in Buddhism also greatly helped temples thrive. At the same time, as the number of monks increased, and Buddhism became rapidly disseminated, there was a stronger need for the state to control and regulate its various orders. Hence, standard procedures were established for entering priesthood, and certain restrictions were placed on private donations toward the construction of a Buddhist temple or creation of a Buddha statue.

The creation of offices responsible for Buddhist affairs began in the mid-sixth century with the appointment of Guktong, Doyuna, or Daeseoseong. In the mid-seventh century, Jutong and Guntong were appointed to oversee Buddhist affairs in local regions, as well as officials practically in charge of administering them. In 785, monk-officials appeared for the first time when Jeonggwan was established and staffed with monks. The Guktong's role, largely symbolic, was to represent the interest of Buddhism and its various orders. The Doyuna, meanwhile, served a technical function, and the main responsibility of this post was to introduce advanced cultures of the outside world to Silla. A Jutong was a temporary post for the administration of Buddhist affairs in local regions, appointed when the need arose. The Seongjeon was in charge of the maintenance of the Seongjeon temple and management of farmland and slaves belonging thereto. Patronized by the royal family, the Seongjeon temple fulfilled the role of maintaining oversight on other Buddhist temples and administering Buddhist affairs.

Two types of Buddhist rituals existed: daily and annual. Daily prayers held six times through the course of the day and annually recurring rites such as the Ganggyeongbeophoe, Yeundeunghoe, and the Palgwanhoe are such examples. Initially a ritual for the war dead, the Palgwanhoe took on the characteristics of a national defense ritual during the reign of Queen Seondeok. After the unification of the Three Kingdoms, however, it evolved into a form closer to a Buddhist festival. The Yeondeunghoe is an annual event in which the faithful across the country light a lantern in honor of Buddha, blending elements of early religious rituals and the native custom of ancestor worship with a Buddhist ritual.

During the Middle period, the cult of Maitreya became widely popular among both aristocrats and common folk, as evidenced by the production





of pensive Bodhisattva statues in large numbers in Baekje and Silla around the mid-seventh century. This was the result of the poplularity of Buddhism penetrating all segments of Silla society at that time. The broad dissemination of Buddhism was accompanied by the emergence of the cult of certain deities like Amitabha or Avalokitesvara. The Amitabha cult promised rebirth in paradise to those who earnestly chanted the name of Amitabha. In the Middle period, the in-depth study of Buddhist scriptures by monks and the stronger devotional fervor drove the popularity of this cult even further, with Amitabha becoming the chief Buddha worshipped in relation to memorial rites for the dead. As for the Avalokitesvara cult, there was a strong emphasis on the safety and prosperity of the kingdom and other forms of earthly rewards. Of course, this cult was not devoid of concerns about the afterlife, and Avalokitesvara was one of the most venerated Buddhist deities among people of this period.

### Buddhism in the Late Period

Once into the ninth century, conflicts among Gyeongju-based Silla aristocrats arose, sharply dividing them into opposing camps. Amid this infighting in the central government, large uprisings occurred in the provinces, ushering in a new tumultuous period. On the front of Buddhism, the non-Zen sects of Buddhism such as Huayan or Consciousness-only Buddhism saw their influence eroded by the emergence of Zen Buddhism.

Unlike non-Zen Buddhism in which enlightenment is to be attained through the study of scriptures, Zen Buddhism emphasized mediation as a direct means to achieve enlightenment. The idea that meditation supersedes sacred scriptures was revolutionary to say the least. By so challenging the fundamental premise of the existing system of Buddhism, Zen Buddhism responded to the deep-seated desire for reform in the Buddhist world, which had been fomenting at the same time as the desire for social change in society at large.

Southern Zen Buddhism was brought to Silla during the reigns of Heondeok and Heungdeok by Doui, Hongcheok, and other monks returning from China. As Zen Buddhism offered the means to reach enlightenment to all, it weakened the authority of Buddhism as endorsed by the royal family. Doui, who failed to elicit a favorable response in the royal capital, ultimately retreated to Seoraksan Mountain. Hongcheok, who was more successful than Doui, received support from the king to found the

Fig 29 Borimsa of Gajisanmun School, Jangheung

*Silsangsanmun* School of Zen Buddhism. The Silsangsanmun School was one of the nine schools of Zen Buddhism independently founded in Silla (Gusanseonmun) upon the introduction of the Southern Zen Buddhism of China. Interestingly, they were all founded in mountainous areas located far away from Gyeongju. The complete list includes Gajisanmun <Fig 29>, the first to be created, Silsangsanmun, *Sagulsanmun*, *Seongjusanmun*, *Sajasanmun*, *Huiyangsanmun*, *Bongnimsanmun*, and *Sumisanmun*. These orders wielded tremendous influence on Korean Buddhism between late Silla and early Goryeo, and the widespread penetration of Zen Buddhism also brought about changes in Silla's overall culture. One example is the consumption of tea, originally a practice only seen among Zen monks that was later adopted by royals and aristocrats.

Buddha statues in Zen Buddhist temples were most often cast in iron, the choice of material mainly due to the scarcity of copper. They also represent Vairocana most of the times. Because Vairocana is the main Buddha worshipped in Huayan Buddhism, the preponderance of Vairocana is generally taken as an indication of the ties between these two schools of Buddhism. The disciples of founding members of Zen orders erected





magnificent stupas and pagoda steles upon the passing of their mentors to commemorate their life and work, as well as to demonstrate the power and influence of their respective orders.

Along with Zen Buddhism, feng shui became extremely popular during this period. Feng shui is a philosophical system seeking to harmonize human beings with their environment by studying the energy flow of the land and understanding its various characteristics. The requirement of harmony between the wind and water, the key elements in feng shui, was something that was scrupulously followed in the construction of Zen temples, for example. The nine Zen orders, all based in mountain valleys, were proud of their location and its surrounding environment, each calling its own location as the best Buddhist site in Silla. And they sought to make their temples a cultural center and not just a religious center for their respective area.

The growing influence of Zen Buddhism in the Late Period caused the non-Zen Buddhist clergy to question many of their existing beliefs and practices. Among members of the Huayan School, there were self-criticisms about their overly scholarly leanings, as well as efforts to re-examine its roots and honor the memories of the founding monks. Meanwhile, the administration of Buddhist affairs was mainly ensured by Jeonggwan, the officials of Jeongbeopjeon. Monks belonging to Jeongbeopjeon closely assisted the king in matters related to Buddhism. They allotted land to temples and played a key role in the royal family's projects for constructing new temples. Monk-officials in charge of administering Buddhist affairs in the capital city included Guktong, Doyunarang, Daedoyuna, Daeseoseong, and Sonyeonseoseng. In provinces, nine Jutong and eighteen Guntong were appointed to oversee local Buddhist affairs.

### A Borderless Exchange of Silla Buddhism

Buddhism in Silla and in East Asia at large greatly benefited in its growth from the pilgrimages made by monks. Silla monks traveled to China and also to India, the cradle of Buddhism, and to places further west. From the early seventh century on, Silla monks visited various sacred sites of Buddhism in India and even studied at Nalanda University. I-ching, in his *Da Tang Xiyu Qiu Fa Gao Seng Zhuan Jiao Zhu* [Biography of Eminent Monks Who Went to the Western World in Search of the Law during the Great Tang Dynasty], included the biographies of seven Silla monks, the likes of Ariyabalma, Hyeeop, Hyeontae, Hyeongak, and Heryun. Hyecho

studied esoteric Buddhism in China, becoming the new heir of a lineage begun by Jingangzhi and Bu Kong. He also traveled across India and toured various places in Central Asia. His three-volume travel relations, *Wangocheonchukgukjeon* [Memoir of the Pilgrimage to Five Kingdoms of India], recount his experiences from these trips.

Silla monks went to India to acquire Sanskrit versions of Buddhist scriptures that were not available in China or of those scriptures that were inaccurately translated into Chinese or needed clarifications. The vast majority of Silla monks who went to India never managed to return home. In contrast, those who traveled to China mostly returned safely to Silla. Some of the monks who went to China stayed, however; they made major contributions to the development of Chinese Buddhism through such activities as translation and exegesis of scriptures, and by putting Buddha's teachings into action. Monks who returned from China were generally received warmly in Silla, and some of them enjoyed respect and obeisance from royals, aristocrats, and the general populace alike.

The experiences these monks acquired from abroad were instrumental to the development of Buddhism in Silla. Initially, Silla Buddhism contained many elements that made it akin to black magic. Later, when Buddhism started to be perceived as a universal religion, with its philosophical

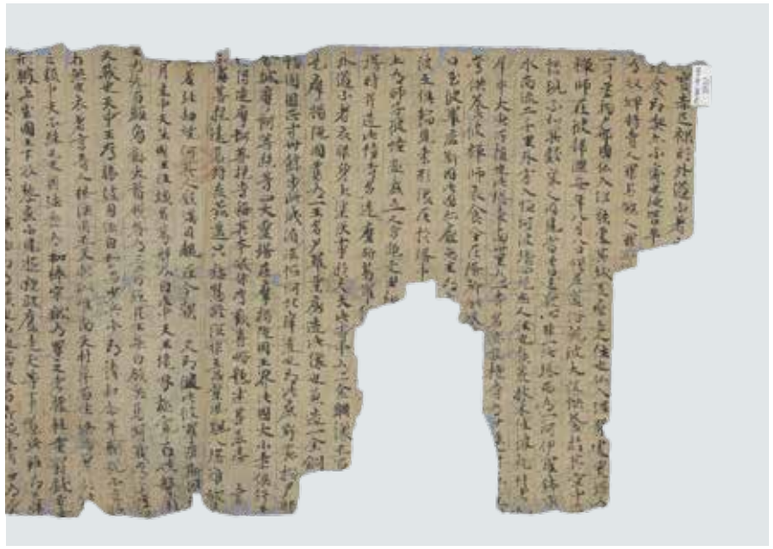


Fig 30 Front part of *Wangocheonchukgukjeon*, Hyecho (National Library of Paris, France)





dimensions becoming known, there was a need for understanding this new religion more in depth. As such, Silla kings sent monks to China to learn about how Buddhism was practiced there. These monks returned to Silla with Buddhist scriptures, statues, and sarira, which proved tremendously enriching for Silla's culture. Meanwhile, Buddhist exchanges between Silla and Tang and between Silla and Japan took place mainly through books. Due to this exchange of scriptures, Buddhism acquired a cosmopolitan quality in throughout these places. The advanced Buddhist philosophy the monks brought back from China also spawned various schools of Buddhism in Silla.

Some of the books by Silla monks were also introduced in Tang China. A number of books by the monk Wonhyo, including *Simmunhwajaengnon* [Treatise on the Reconciliation of the Ten Schools], *Gisinmonso* [Annotations to the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana], and *Hwaeomgyeongso* [Annotations to the Avatamsaka Sutra], were widely read in the Tang. Silla monks traveled across China, meeting with the enlightened and touring sacred sites. Among their favorite destinations were Mt. Wutai, believed to be the residence of Manjusri Bodhisattva; Guoqingsi, the head temple of the *Tiantai* School of Buddhism; Mt. Caoxi, where the stupa of the monk Huineng was located; and the Xian area including Mt. Zhongnan, dotted by countless temples. Aside from the immeasurable contribution they made to the flourishing of Buddhism in East Asia, these traveling monks also left indelible marks on Japanese Buddhism, serving as the catalysts for the founding of the *Shingon* School and the spread of the Tiantai School in Japan.

Buddhism proved to be a catalyst for Silla's cultural exchange with Goguryeo and Baekje despite the existing political tensions. For example, Wonhyo and Uisang learned about nirvana from the Goguryeo monk Bodeok. Abiji, the Baekje builder, took part in the construction of the nine-story pagoda in Hwangnyongsa Temple. Buddhism was also a valuable diplomatic tool for Silla in its dealings with Tang China and Japan. Buddha statues were sent as gifts, and state envoys paid visits to Buddhist temples. During the eighth century, Silla Buddhism had a particularly strong influence on Japanese Buddhism. Japanese monks flowed into Silla in great numbers to deepen their understanding of Buddhist precepts, and Silla monks traveled to Japan to spread Buddha's teachings there. The various Buddhist texts written by Silla monks were transmitted to the Japanese archipelago, profoundly influencing the course of development of Japanese Buddhism in this time period.

# 4 Buddhist Art

As is well known, Buddhist art accounts for the bulk of artworks from the Unified Silla period. This is not to say that there was no artistic production in this period other than Buddhist art. Unfortunately, however, no examples of secular works such as general paintings and calligraphies have survived. The discussion in this section is centered on Buddhist art for this reason. According to *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, there were some one hundred and sixty Buddhist temples in Unified Silla, a number far greater than that during the preceding period. However, remains of only about thirty temples have been identified in the Gyeongju area, and artifacts recovered from these sites are equally limited. Judging from these artifacts, limited in number though they are, it is evident that art from Unified Silla surpassed that of all preceding eras in intricacy and sophistication.

Buddhist art of the Unified Silla period may be divided according to the current of Buddhism; namely, non-Zen and Zen Buddhism. However, Buddhist artworks in Namsan Mountain of Gyeongju and those at Bulguksa Temple and the Seokguram Grotto will be separately discussed, given their special significance in the history of Silla art and their massive quantity. Although they are at times discovered at sites associated with the royal palace such as Donggung and Wolji, Buddhist artworks, including Buddhist sculptures, pagodas, sarira holders, and other various objects used in temples such as temple bells, gongs, and stone lanterns, are mostly found in temple ruins.





## Non-zen Buddhism and the Blossoming of Buddhist Art

### Royal Capital

Initially constructed mostly within the royal capital, Buddhist temples were progressively built in later eras, in places outside the capital area. Countless Buddhist temples existed inside the capital, ranging from those patronized by the royal family such as Hwangnyongsa, Sacheonwangsa, and Bongdeoksa, to others like Bunhwangsa, Mangdeoksa, Hwangboksa, Samnangsa, Bulguksa, and Gamsansa. On this subject, *Samguk yusa* records, “temples spread out like stars in the sky, and pagodas stand next to one another like wild geese in a formation.” As Buddhism gained further ground in Silla, and many aristocrats had temples and pagodas built for the dead members of their family, the number of temples constructed in provinces also increased sharply.

The first temple constructed upon the unification of the Three Kingdoms was Sacheonwangsa Temple site. On his return to Silla from China, the monk Uisang warned King Munmu (r. 661-681) about the impending attack by the Tang. In 679, Sacheonwangsa Temple site was constructed to thwart this attack by Tang China through Buddha’s power. The construction was proposed by Myeongnang, a monk who was said to have visited the underwater palace of the Dragon King and learned the arts of magic there. As such, Sacheonwangsa Temple site, built as a national defense temple, was also a temple of the highest caliber, and was thus provided with its own seongjeon, an administrative agency dedicated to the management of temples of great importance.

The first twin pagodas of Silla were also built on its grounds. We still do not understand the exact reason behind the decision to set up a pair of pagodas, instead of setting up a single pagoda, which had been the customary practice until then. Although some have argued that it was an original initiative undertaken by Silla shortly after the unification of the Three Kingdoms, this view is implausible given the existence of other twin pagodas in China and Japan built around the same time period. The main structures of the twin pagodas appear to have been constructed with wood, and the stone steps on its four sides above the square platform suggest that they were enterable.

Sacheonwang, or the Four Heavenly Kings, were the main deities invoked in Unified Silla for divine intervention in defending the kingdom against attack from Tang China. Although Hwangnyongsa Temple site,

constructed during the Middle Ancient period, already served as a national defense temple, a temple that would be specifically associated with the Four Heavenly Kings, the new defense deities, was necessary. Simply adding a sanctuary dedicated to the Four Heavenly Kings on the grounds of existing temples like Hwangnyongsa Temple or Geumgwangsa Temple was clearly not good enough; a whole new temple had to be built and named after them. Such perceived need indicates the importance accorded to the Four Heavenly Kings at that time. Also interesting is the fact that the sarira holders inside the twin pagodas at Gameunsa Temple site, another national defense temple built three years later, feature the sculptures of the Four Heavenly Kings. Gameunsa Temple was a temple constructed by King Sinmun for King Munmu, his late father, who had sworn on his deathbed to be reborn

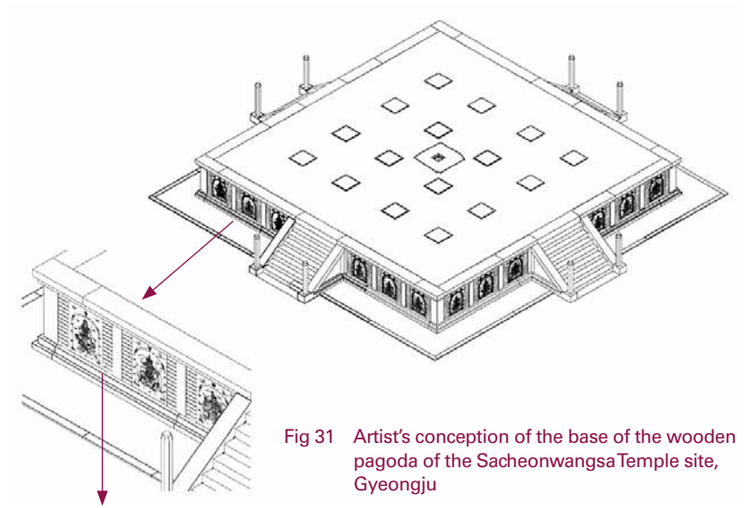


Fig 31 Artist's conception of the base of the wooden pagoda of the Sacheonwangsa Temple site, Gyeongju

Fig 32 Bas-relief at the Sacheonwangsa Temple site





as a dragon and safeguard Silla. As is evident, the Four Heavenly Kings enjoyed a special significance in Silla's national defense temples during the early years following the conclusion of the unification wars.

In 2012, the excavation project at the Sacheonwangsa Temple site concluded without finding the anticipated sculptures of the Four Heavenly Kings. What did emerge from the excavation was that the bas-reliefs surrounding the pagoda base represented the Divine Generals and not the Four Heavenly Kings <Fig 31, 32>. The armored generals, each carrying a weapon, are represented seated on the so-called living creature pedestal, and the bas-relief sculptures were made using a mold, then added to the pagoda. Although found shattered, these sculptures are impressive in their artistic quality and or this reason considered some of the finest Buddhist sculptures of Silla, alongside the likes of bas-reliefs of the Seokguram Grotto. These sculptures also interest researchers for the possible connection with a sculptor named Yangji mentioned in *Samguk yusa*. In 682, King Sinmun had two three-story stone pagodas built inside the precincts of Gameunsa Temple to honor the memory of his late father King Munmu <Fig 33>. The two pagodas.

Fig 33 East and west three-story stone pagodas at Gameunsa Temple site, Gyeongju

consisting of three main levels mounted on a two-tier base, are identical in size and appearance. Although constructed in stone, these two pagodas echo the wooden twin pagodas of Sacheonwangsa Temple site and are among the earliest examples of their kind. These two pagodas are massive and masculine, as though to embody the stout-heartedness of Silla people who came out victorious in the unification wars. Moreover, the sarira holders discovered inside the two pagodas exemplify the splendid craftsmanship of Silla, marrying a masculine aesthetic with delicateness and intricacy of details. As previously discussed, the sculptures of the Four Heavenly Kings are found on the surface of the outer caskets of these sarira holders.

These sculptures were not directly carved onto the religuries, but separately made and joined to their surfaces. They are the earliest examples representing the images of the Four Heavenly Kings <Fig 34>, whose role was safeguarding the sarira that are lodged inside the religuries. As Gameunsa Temple served as a national defense temple, however, they must also have had a defense-related function. One of the four figures clearly represents Vaisravana holding a miniature pagoda in one hand, in turn an indication that they are indeed the Four Heavenly Kings. Each is clad in a suit of armor and holds various weapons; none of them, however, is wearing a helmet. Although small bas-reliefs measuring just about 20 cm in

Fig 34 Outer sarira reliquaries found inside the east and west three-story stone pagodas of Gameunsa Temple site





height, these sculptures wonderfully depict facial features and fine details of the armor suit and deserve to be considered some of the greatest works from Silla representing the Four Heavenly Kings.

Ten Buddha sculptures realized on gilt bronze plates were discovered at Wolji. Two of them represented a Buddha triad, and eight of them Bodhisattvas. Although no date inscription was found on any of these sculptures, they are estimated to have been made circa 680 when Wolji was first established, and the buildings surrounding it were completed. The discovery at this site of a brick with the date inscription of the second Joro year (680) also supports this view. Gilt bronze Buddha triads piague are an entirely new style of Buddhist sculptures, never encountered in periods prior to the unification of the Three Kingdoms. In the triad in <Fig 35>, the Buddha in the middle is dressed in a robe that covers both shoulders, and his hands are held in *the Dharmachakra mudra*. The two Bodhisattvas on either side of him are represented in the so-called three-curve position. The sudden apparition of gilt bronze Buddha pigue with highly expressive bodily representations might have been the result of similar Chinese sculptures flowing into Silla, and these Buddhas are likely to have been modeled on them.

This Buddha triad was originally housed in the inner sanctuary of

Fig 35 Gilt-bronze Buddha plaque excavated from Wolji, Gyeongju

Fig 36 Bronze Buddha-motif brick mold from west stone pagoda of Hwaeomsa Temple, Gurye

Donggung, or the East Palace. The holes found along the edge of the halo suggest that it was a prayer object designed to be attached to a miniature shrine like the Tamamushi shrine of Japan or to a small wooden Buddha niche, as exemplified by Treasure No. 198 of Horyuji, also in Japan. This item is quite a rare example in terms of both the overall style and the mudra. The gilt bronze seated Bodhisattva, excavated at an ancient garden site in Guhwang-dong, is about the only other example reminiscent of its style. Meanwhile, the bronze Buddha-motif brick mold <Fig 36>, found inside the western pagoda of Hwaeomsa Temple is an extremely rare sculpture in which the Buddha's hands are gathered in the *Dharmachakra* mudra.

The standing Buddha cast in pure gold <Fig 37>, discovered enclosed inside a sarira religury within the three-story stone pagoda of Hwangboksa, also represents an unprecedented style. This sculpture is believed to have been based on a Chinese model that had recently been brought to Silla, as was the case with the gilt bronze plate-sculpted Buddhas. A long text, consisting of three hundred fifty characters, engraved on the inner surface

Fig 37 Gold standing Buddha from three-story stone pagoda at Hwangboksa Temple site, Gyeongju

Fig 38 Three-story stone pagoda at Hwangboksa Temple site, Gyeongju





of the lid of the sarira casket in which the gold Buddha was found lodged, states that the stone pagoda <Fig 38> was constructed in the first year of King Hyoso's rule (692) to pray for the peace of King Sinmun's soul, on the initiative of the king and the widowed queen consort to the late king. The carved text further informs that in 706, King Seongdeok had Buddha's sarira placed inside the same stone pagoda, along with a statue of Amitabha made in pure gold and a copy of the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* (hereinafter the "*Great Dharani Sutra*"), to pray for the souls, this time, of King Sinmun, his queen consort, and King Hyoso, as well as the peace and prosperity of the royal house. Both of the shoulders of the gold standing Buddha are covered by the robe, which drapes down in multiple U-shaped curves that end below knee level. The left hand is shown to lightly hold a train of the robe, an element commonly encountered in Indian Buddhist statues and rarely seen in Silla statues.

Particularly notable is the mention of the *Great Dharani Sutra* in the text inscribed on the sarira casket lid because the inscription means that the sutra, translated in 704 by the two Chinese monks Mituoshan and Fazang, was already available in Silla's royal court-barely two years after the date of translation. Such speed in the transmission of Buddhist scriptures from China indicates that new sculptural styles arrived equally rapidly during this period. The gold standing Buddha, the oldest example of a Buddhist statue included in a sarira reliquary, is significant, as it bears witness to the receptiveness of Silla sculpture to new Buddhist cultural elements from the outside world.

Located at Gwaereung-ri, Oedong-eup, Gyeongju, Gamsansa Temple is a temple founded in 719 (eighteenth year of King Seongdeok's rule) by Kim Ji-seong who prayed for the souls of his late parents and the welfare of the king and the royal family. Kim dedicated a Maitreya statue to his mother and an Amitabha statue to his father <Fig 39, 40>. The complete circumstance of creation of these Buddhist sculptures is provided in the inscription on the backside of the mandorla, along with the names of the artisans who sculpted the statues. The clearly established dates render these two Buddhist statues extremely significant for the history of Korean Buddhist sculpture.

Of these two, the Amitabha statue is particularly famous for its original drapery. An example of a sculpture with a similar drapery style is the sandstone standing Buddha in the collection at the Gyeongju National Museum. Both of these statues have robust bodies with wide, plump

Fig 39 Stone standing Amitabha Buddha of Gamsansa Temple, Gyeongju

Fig 40 Stone standing Maitreya Bodhisattva of Gamsansa Temple, Gyeongju

shoulders, well-developed chests, slim waists, and powerful thighs. The thin robe, worn close to the body, accentuates the volume in these two sculptures. Most notable of all is the drapery, however. The U-shaped folds in the chest and abdomen area fork into two separate piles of folds deployed on either leg, a style of drapery known as the King Udyana-style drapery. Pioneered by these two statues, this style was followed thereafter by countless gilt bronze standing Buddhas of the Unified Silla period.

The Maitreya statue is equally interesting in several aspects. During this period, Maitreya was most often represented in a pensive attitude, seated in a half-lotus position. This sculpture is an exception as it represents Maitreya in a standing position. Furthermore, Maitreya is shown wearing a crown carved with the Metamorphosed Buddha, a detail normally associated uniquely with Avalokitesvara.

Also notable is the four-sided sculpture at the ancient site of Gulbulsa Temple site in Gyeongju <Fig 41>. Various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are carved on the four sides of a large rock. The east side features the Medicine





Fig 41 Four-sided Buddha sculptures of Gulbulsa Temple site, Gyeongju

Buddha, the west side Amitabha, the south Shakyamuni Buddha, and the north side a Buddha presumed to be Maitreya. Next to the Buddha believed to represent Maitreya is the sculpture of Avalokitesvara with eleven heads. The sculptures are of various different types, ranging from three-dimensional ones to bas-reliefs and petroglyphs. Nearly as varied are positions assumed by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, with some standing and some others seated. The quality of sculpture is both soft and lively, a defining characteristic of early Unified Silla sculptural works.

Of the pagodas situated within the royal capital, the twin pagoda of Wonwonsa Temple site stands out for the bas-reliefs of the Four Heavenly Kings and the Twelve Zodiac Animals found on the surfaces of its main body and base <Fig 42>. The Twelve Zodiac Animals carved on the upper tier of the base represent twelve creatures, each with an animal head and a human body, which are dressed in regular clothes rather than battle suits. The first main level features on its four sides sculptures of the Four Heavenly Kings, each wearing a suit of armor and carrying a weapon. In this regard, it is worth noting that in *Samguk yusa*, Wonwonsa Temple site is described as a national defense temple founded to safeguard the royal capital from Japanese attack.

Fig 42 West three-story stone pagoda of Wonwonsa Temple site, Gyeongju

The western five-story pagoda of Janghang-ri <Fig 43> is another pagoda from a similar time period that deserves attention. One of two twin pagodas found in an area at the southeastern foot of Tohamsan Mountain where a temple used to stand has survived in a nearly intact state. This beautifully proportioned stone pagoda is also praised for the lively depiction of *Vajradpani* in the bas-relief on the first level. Meanwhile, the Buddha statue made with stone quarried in Tohamsan, found in broken fragments near this pagoda, has been restored to its original appearance and placed in the yard outside the Gyeongju National Museum <Fig 44>.

As for temple bells from the Unified Silla period, nine have survived





Fig 43 West five-story stone pagoda in Janghang-ri, Gyeongju

Fig 44 Stone standing Buddha in Janghang-ri, Gyeongju

to the present. Of the five bells that were discovered in Korea, two were destroyed, and the remaining four are in Japan. The Sangwonsa Temple Bell, cast in 725, is the oldest of them <Fig 45>. Judging from the quality of workmanship, temple bells appear to have been produced in Korea in a routine manner since far before this date.

By the late seventh century to the early eighth century, distinctive styles for temple bells evolved in Korea as well as in China and Japan.

The Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok (771) was cast more than four decades after the Sangwonsa Temple Bell <Fig 46>. Standing 3.75 m tall, this massive bell is an eponymous bell. Although planned during King Gyeongdeok's reign to honor the wise rule of King Seongdeok and pray for the prosperity of the royal house and the country, the bell was completed much later, in the seventh year of King Hyegong's reign (771). The inscription on the surface of the Bell of King Seongdeok reads: "Profound truths contain also what lies beyond the visible realm. This is why men fail to recognize

Fig 45 Bronze bell of Sangwonsa Temple, Pyeongchang

Fig 46 Sacred Bell of Great King Seongdeok, Gyeongju

them even as they see them. Likewise, when the thundering sound of truths shakes the earth, men fail to understand the source of their echoes. Thus, just as Buddha awakens us to truth, using appropriate parables that are suited to the given circumstance or person, this sacred bell was cast to let people hear the fulsome sound of noble truths." This bell is arguably the finest bell ever produced during the Silla period, surpassing any other bell from this period in terms of size, shape, and surface design as well as acoustic quality.

As consensus has it, the three most artistically accomplished gilt bronze Buddhas from the Unified Silla period are the Bhaisajyaguru medicine Buddha of Baengnyulsa Temple, and the Vairocana and Amitabha of Bulguksa Temple. Here, we will discuss only the Bhaisajyaguru medicine Buddha of Baengnyulsa Temple <Fig 47>, as the two others at Bulguksa Temple will be covered later in this book. 1.77 m tall, this standing statue was originally housed in Baengnyulsa Temple, a temple built to commemorate the martyrdom of Ichadon, who was put to death while





Fig 47 Gift-bronze standing Bhaisajyaguru medicine Buddha at Baengnyulsa Temple, Gyeongju

Fig 48 Illustration of the Picture Story of Transformation in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*

championing Buddhism at a time when there was a strong resistance against the acceptance of this new religion. The statue is currently on display in the Gyeongju National Museum. Praised for the gracefully proportioned body and elegant, fluid drapery, the statue occupies a special place in the history of Korean sculpture and is considered invaluable also for understanding the Buddhist dress style of this period.

As for Silla paintings, an illustration in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* dating from 754-755 is the only surviving example <Fig 48>. According to the provided note, this hand-transcribed sutra was created on the initiative of the monk Yeongi of Hwangnyongsa Temple in Gyeongju. Although some historians

believe that Yeongi of Hwangnyongsa Temple is the same person as the monk of the same name who founded Hwaeomsa Temple, no evidence is available to confirm this. The illustration was on the front cover of the sutra. The hand-copied sutra contains volumes one to ten and forty-three to fifty of the Chinese translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra by Shikshananda, which consists of eighty total volumes. Realized on a sheet of mulberry paper with gold and silver powder and ink, the painting was placed so that one half is on the front, and the other half on the backsides of the cover page. Currently, the painting is in two pieces: the front portion depicts the image of the Divine Generals, and the back, Vairocana seated on seven lions accompanied by Bodhisattvas. The painting combines a realistic rendering of the voluptuous physical beauty of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and their elegant body lines with an idealized depiction of the Buddhist world.

Although only a single example has survived, written records attest to the production of Buddhist paintings of various different types during the Late period. Murals, either on the inner or outer walls of a temple, appear to have been more popular than thangkas or other types of paintings on paper or silk that were meant to be hung. The most popularly painted deities were Avalokitesvara, including eleven-face Avalokitesvara and thousand-hand Avalokitesvara, and Maitreya, thus mirroring the widespread cults of Avalokitesvara and Maitreya in Unified Silla.

### Outside the Capital

Among three regions of Yeongnam, Gyeonggi/Gangwon, and Honam/Hoseo, Yeongnam is most abundantly endowed with Buddhist treasures. Interestingly, some of the Buddhist artworks and artifacts from the northern section of the Yeongnam region faithfully retain the characteristics of the Middle Ancient Period. The rock-carved Buddha of Bukji-ri, Bonghwa <Fig 49>, and rock-carved Buddha of Gaheung-ri, Yeongju, are two cases in point. The rock-carved Buddha of Bukji-ri is inside a niche-like recession created in a rock cliff. The Buddha in high relief has a large head and unusually large hands, conveying an overall impression of roundness. These are precisely the distinctive characteristics of Buddha statues from the Middle Ancient Period, as exemplified by those discovered in Bae-dong and Jangchanggol of Namsan Mountain. The Bukji-ri Buddha is estimated to date from the late seventh century. The rock-carved Buddha triad of Gaheung-ri, Yeongju, located on a shore cliff at a bank of the Seocheon, is quite similar to it in style.





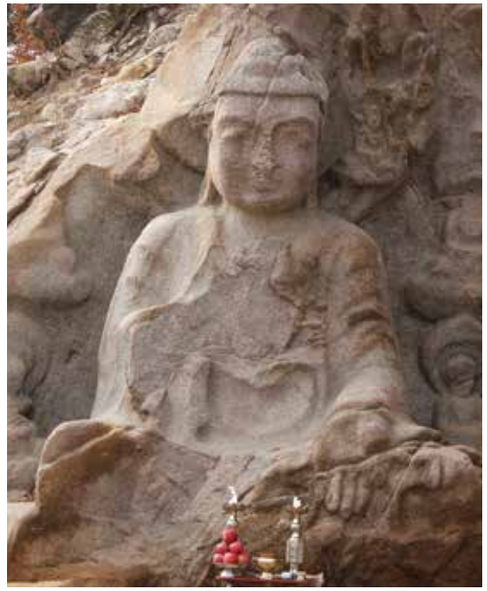


Fig 49 Rock-carved seated Buddha in Bukji-ri, Bonghwa

Fig 50 Amitabha Buddha triad, Gunwi

The Buddha triad of Gunwi, Gyeongbuk, is carved on a rock cliff in Palgongsan Mountain and is noted for the transitional characteristics it exhibits. While the main Buddha shows the typical characteristics of Middle Ancient-Period Buddhist sculptures, the two attendant Bodhisattvas to his left and right are represented in the three-curve posture, an iconographical element newly introduced around this time <Fig 50>. Although very similar to each other in the overall style, one of the Bodhisattvas wears a headdress that features the Metamorphosed Buddha, while the other's headdress is carved with a kundika bottle, indicating that the former represents Avalokitesvara and the latter, Mahasthamaprapta.

The two three-story stone pagodas and the seated stone Buddha of of Galhangsa Temple site in Gimcheon are also worthy <Fig 51, 52>. The precise date of construction is known thanks to the inscription at the base of the eastern pagoda. The two pagodas were built in 758 (seventeenth year of King Gyeongdeok's reign) by the monk Eonjeok and his two siblings. Eonjeok's sister and brother were the aunt and uncle of Kim Gyeong-sin who later became King Wonseong, the thirty-eighth ruler of Silla. However,

Fig 51 East three-story stone pagoda from Galhangsa Temple site, Gimcheon

Fig 52 Stone seated Buddha of Galhangsa Temple site, Gimcheon





the inscription itself appears to date from some thirty years after the date of construction of the pagodas, during Wonseong's reign. The comely-looking seated Buddha with a round face lit by a light smile is also estimated to have been carved at the same time, in 758, or shortly before or after this date.

The stone Vairocana statue at the ancient site of Seongnamamsa in Sancheong was created at a slightly later date. The oldest surviving Vairocana statue in Korea <Fig 53>, this statue was relocated from its original site to Naewonsa Temple in Sancheong sometime in the past. A sarira urn <Fig 54> has been recovered inside a hole in the middle of the throne on which Vairocana is seated. The phrase "*Yeongtae i-nyeon Byeongo*" found within the inscription on the sarira urn indicates that the stone statue was created in 766 (second year of King Hyegong's reign). Dansoksa Temple, another temple located in the Sancheong area, is famously known as the place where Solgeo painted the portrait of Yumageosa (Vimalakirti). Regarded as the greatest Silla painter, Solgeo is believed to have been active in the mid-eighth century during King Gyeongdeok's time (r. 742-765). In a well- known anecdote about a mural at Hwangnyongsa Temple painted by Solgeo, which represented aged pine trees, birds beguiled by the realistic look of the pines are said to have flown to them only to crash into the wall. Though Solgeo is also said to have painted in remote places like Dansoksa Temple and praised highly in written records, none of his paintings have survived.

There were also a string of major Unified Silla-period temples in Changnyeong, with the two three-story stone pagodas of Suljeong-ri being some of the surviving edifices. Of these two, the western pagoda is particularly notable. A masterpiece of the kind seldom encountered outside the royal capital, this pagoda flaunts an elegant silhouette at the same time as being massive <Fig 55>. Another important Unified Silla-era monument in Changnyeong is the stone stele carved with the date and circumstance of the construction of Inyangsa Temple, created circa 810 <Fig 56>. The front of this unusual stele is carved with the image of a monk, and the two sides and the back bear inscriptions. It must be noted here that steles carved with the image of a monk are rather rare. The inscriptions relate events over a forty-year period between the seventh year of King Hyegong's rule (771), when it is said that a temple bell was cast there, and the second year of King Heondeok's reign (810).

A seated stone Buddha is housed at Yaksajeon Hall of Gwallyongsa Temple in Changnyeong, and another one is found at the summit of a

Fig 53 Stone seated Vairocana Buddha from Seongnamam Hermitage site, Sancheong

Fig 54 Agalmatolite reliquary from Seongnamam Hermitage site, Sancheong

Fig 55 West three-story stone pagoda in Suljeong-ri, Changnyeong

Fig 56 Stele for the construction of Inyangsa Temple, Changnyeong





Fig 57 Stone seated Buddha at Yaksajeon of Gwallyongsa Temple, Changnyeong

Fig 58 Stone seated Buddha of Yongseondae cliff of Gwallyongsa Temple, Changnyeong

mountain, about 500 m west of the temple precincts <Fig 57, 58>. The date inscriptions on the thrones of the two Buddha statues have been discovered only recently. According to these inscriptions, the former is a Maitreya statue, carved in the eighth year of Hyegong's reign (772), and the latter was created sometime between 722 (twenty-first year of Seongdeok's reign) and 730 (thirtieth year of Seongdeok's reign). However, there are some uncertainties surrounding these two statues; for instance, whether the statues and their thrones were created at the same time and whether the inscriptions date from the time of their creation constitute two points of contention. Meanwhile, at an ancient temple site at Malheul- ri, Changnyeong, a large cache of metal artifacts were discovered inside an iron pot with a long handle, including an incense burner, wind chime, padlock, and a door handle ornament <Fig 59>. Although these objects appear to have been buried during the Goryeo Dynasty or even later, most of them are handicrafts produced during the Unified Silla period.

From the ninth century on, more Buddhist artifacts can be clearly dated. One example is the Bhaisajyaguru Medicine Buddha triad, realized

Fig 59 Incense burner of Malheul-ri, Changnyeong

Fig 60 Stone seated Buddha at Gwanbong peak in Palgongsan Mountain, Daegue

in petroglyph on a rock cliff of Bangeosan Mountain in Haman, Gyeongnam, which bears the date inscription of 801 (second year of King Aejang's reign). The main Buddha holds a medicine jar in the left hand, an unequivocal mark of the Bhaisajxaguru Medicine Buddha. The attendant Bodhisattvas escorting him from either side are Suryaprabha (Sunlight Bodhisattva) and Candraprabha (Moonlight Bodhisattva). Another Buddhist sculpture dating from the ninth century is the seated stone Buddha <Fig 60> of Gwanbong Peak in Palgongsan Mountain. This Buddha, whose head is surmounted by a flat stone, is known also as the Gatbawi Buddha (Hat Rock Buddha), as the stone reminds one of a wide-brimmed hat. The rock face deployed in the background serves as a natural aureola to the Buddha. The plump yet solemn face, stylized drapery folds, and the flat torso are some of the elements that distinguish this ninth-century sculpture from those from the eighth century.

Interestingly, brick pagodas were popularly built in places outside the capital area during the Unified Silla period, but they are found particularly widely in Andong and its environs. Aside from the Andong area, a brick pagoda is found at Songnimsa Temple in Chilgok. This five-story brick pagoda, originally built shortly after the unification of the Three Kingdoms, was repaired during the Goryeo Dynasty. The five brick-built stories are mounted on a granite base. In 1959 when the pagoda was disassembled for repair, a tortoise-shaped casket that contained a sarira reliquary was discovered inside its second level. The





pavilion-shaped sarira holder, glass bottle, and the glass cup are particularly noteworthy elements in this sarira reliquary. The glass cup, for example, is quite reminiscent of glassware of Western origin found inside Maripgan-period tombs. Of the brick pagodas located in the environs of Andong, the five-story pagoda of Jotap-ri <Fig 62> and the seven-story pagoda of Beopheungsa Temple site are the two most representative examples.

A number of major Buddhist artworks are also found in Biroam Hermitage of Donghwasa Temple in Daegu, including the ninth- century three-story stone pagoda, the sarira jar contained within it, and the seated Vairocana Buddha <Fig 63>. The stone pagoda was constructed in 863 (third year of King

Fig 61 Reliquary from the five-story brick pagoda of Songnimsa Temple, Chilgok

Fig 62 Five-story brick Pagoda in Jotap-ri, Andong

Fig 63 Stone seated Vairocana Buddha at Biroam Hermitage of Donghwasa Temple, Daegu

Fig 64 Bronze items discovered in Ingaksa Temple site of Gunwi

Gyeongmun's reign). The seated stone Vairocana, presumed to have been created at the same time as the pagoda, assumes the *bodhasri*-mudra ("fist of wisdom" mudra). The halo is carved with the Metamorphosed Buddha, and the throne is buttressed by seven stone lions.

Aside from the items discovered at the ancient temple site of Malheul- ri and at Ingaksa Temple site of Gunwi, Buddhist handicrafts from this period also include a variety of other items, ranging from temple bells to dragon-head flagpole ornaments. For example, a series of items were discovered at a site at Ingaksa Temple site where a stupa is presumed to have stood. Many of them were cast metal objects such as an incense burner with a handle, incense case, kundika bottle, cylindrically shaped nesting bowls, gong, and a kalavinka statue <Fig 64>. A celadon plate made at the Yue kiln in China was also found among them, as quite a few of the items excavated were imported from Tang China.

Among temple bells located at sites outside the capital area is the Yeonjisa Temple Bell in Jinju with the date inscription of 833 (eighth year of King Heungdeok's reign) <Fig 65>. This bell was taken to Japan in the late sixteenth century as part of the loot from the second Japanese Invasion and is currently housed in the Jogu Shrine in Tsuruga in Fukui Prefecture, Japan. This bell is the only one of some fifty Korean temple bells in Japan to be designated as Japanese National Treasure (No. 78). A gong, known as geumgo, is struck in Buddhist temples to announce the time of the day or alert the parish people to a meeting. This gong <Fig 66> bears on its lateral





Fig 65 Yeonjisa Temple bell in Jinju

Fig 66 Gong with the date "Hamtong", National Museum of Korea

Fig 67 Gilt-bronze Dragon Finial, Daegu National Museum

edge the date inscription *Hamtong yukse Euryu*, which corresponds to 865 (fifth year of King Gyeongmun's reign). The surface has a simple concentric pattern. The flagpole cap, discovered in Punggi, Yeongju, is part of a pulley for hoisting a flag to the top of the staff <Fig 67>. The lifelike sculpture of a dragon with the pulley lodged inside its mouth is impressive for the tasteful design and skilled craftsmanship.

In the Gyeonggi area, the flagpole supports at the ancient site of Janguisa Temple site in Seoul and those at the ancient site of Jungchosa Temple site in Anyang are among the best-known examples. The flagpole supports of Janguisa Temple site, although quite plain with almost no surface decoration, are considered significant as the only examples of this kind found within Seoul. Meanwhile, the flagpole supports of Jungchosa Temple site are the only surviving items of this type with a precisely established date and the known name of the temple to which they belonged <Fig 68>. Aside from a wide recessed area at the top on the outer sides, the flagpole supports have no particular decoration. There are a hole and a vertical groove for inserting the flagpole. The carved inscription indicates that the construction of these flagpole supports began on August 28, 826 (first year of King Heungdeok's reign), and was completed on February 30 of the following year.

The iron Vairocana of Dopiansa Temple, cast in 865 (fifth year of King Gyeongmun's reign), is arguably the most representative Buddhist artwork in the Gangwon area <Fig 69>. The throne is also cast in iron, a detail not commonly encountered. The significance of this statue, however, lies in the inscription found on its surface. It relates that this statue was cast on the initiative of a Buddhist organization with some 1,500 members, offering insights into the changing trends in Buddhism in Unified Silla. The iron Locana Buddha of Samhwasa Temple is another example of an iron Buddha in the Gangwon area. The inscription on the back establishes that this statue represents Locana Buddha and that it was cast in the later part of the Unified Silla period. The characters are engraved inverted in this inscription. Also interesting are the use of Idu and the placement of Chinese characters according to the word order in Korean, both of which make this text highly significant for the linguistic history of Unified Silla.

In the Honam and Hoseo region, quite a large variety of Buddhist artifacts have survived, ranging from Buddhist statue-steles, statues, stupas, and pagodas to stone lanterns, flagpole supports, sarira reliquaries, bronze bells, iron flagpoles, iron pots, and wooden Buddha niches. The environs





Fig 68 Flagpole supports of Jungchosa Temple site in Anyang

Fig 69 Iron seated Vairocana Buddha of Dopiansa Temple, Cheolwon

Fig 70 Stele of Amitabha with inscription of 'Gyeyu year' offered by Jeon

Fig 71 Rock-carved standing Buddha of Yongbongsa Temple, Hongseong

of Yeongi in Chungnam has been focalizing the attention of the historical community for the large number of Buddhist statue-steles dating from circa 680 found there <Fig 70>. Seven of these stone steles with a bas-relief representing a Buddha and accompanied by epigraphs were identified in this area alone. In particular, the epigraph mentioning the name Amitabha holds special significance, as it bears witness to the introduction of new

Buddhist cults and iconographies in this area where, thanks to its location, exchanges with China were easier than they were elsewhere. The epigraph is also a rare window into the mental universe of the former Baekje people placed under the unified rule of Silla.

Also of note is the rock-carved Buddha with the date inscription of 799 (first year of King Soseong's reign), located at Yongbongsa Temple site in Hongseong, Chungnam <Fig 71>. The rock cliff was cut to create a niche-like recession, and a bas-relief of Buddha was created on the inner wall. The hand position of Buddha is rather unusual, with the left hand held up and the right hand held down along one side of the body. Simple and rudimentary sculptures of this kind date generally from the early stage in the creation of Buddhist statues outside the capital area.

The crown jewel of Honam stone pagodas is no doubt the Four-lion Pagoda located at Hwaeomsa Temple in Gurye, Jeonnam <Fig 72>. The pagoda is on Hyodae, the knoll behind Gakhwangjeon Hall. The three-story pagoda is propped up by four stone lions, which surround a sculpture possibly representing a monk holding offerings to the Buddha. The bottom tier of the pagoda base below the four stone lions is carved along the edge with twelve heavenly creatures. Meanwhile, the doors at the first level are guarded by *Geumgangyeoksa* (*Vajradpani*), the Four Heavenly Kings,

Fig 72 Four Lion three-story stone pagoda of Hwaeomsa Temple, Gurye

Fig 73 Twin Lion stone lantern of Beopjusa Temple, Boeun





and Bodhisattvas. The stone lantern outside Gakwhangjeon Hall, on the opposite side from the pagoda, is also propped up by stone lions, but by two instead of four. Standing 6.4 m tall, the stone lantern is the largest stone structure of this type in Korea.

Numerous other stone lanterns have survived in the Hoseo and Honam region. The twin-lion stone lantern of Jungheungsanseong Fortress in Gwangyang, stone lantern of Gaseonsa Temple site in Damyang, stone lantern of Muyrangsa Temple site in Buyeo, and the twin-lion lantern of Beopjusa Temple site in Boeun are some examples. Of these, the stone lantern of Beopjusa Temple site is particularly striking, with two stone lions supporting the middle platform in an upright position, with their two front paws and the mouth <Fig 73>. The wind- swept mane and the tensed leg muscles make these two lions highly realistic representations and exciting pieces of sculpture. This lantern is also considered invaluable for the inscription on the surface of the middle platform, providing two dates, 868 (eighth year of Gyeongmun's reign) and 891 (fifth year of Jinseong's reign) <Fig 74>.

A rare type of Buddhist sculpture surviving in this region is the stone standing Bodhisattva Beautiful, which is also located in Beopjusa Temple <Fig 75>. The Bodhisattva Beautiful is a Bodhisattva appearing in the Lotus Sutra, who is described as being fond of pursuing enlightenment through penance.

Fig 74 Stone lantern at Gaeseonsa Temple site, Damyang

Fig 75 Stone standing Bodhisattva of Beopjusa Temple, Boeun

Fig 76 Gilt-bronze incense burner of Mireuksa Temple, Iksan

In this highly original sculpture, the Bodhisattva Beautiful is represented holding up a large incense burner with the two hands and her head. This sculpture is presumed to have been made by the same artist who sculpted the twin-lion lantern, also located on the grounds of Beopjusa Temple.

Among the metal handicrafts, the gilt bronze incense burner with beast legs from the ancient site of Mireuksa Temple site in Iksan and the temple bell of Uncheong-dong, Cheongju, are two most noteworthy examples. The hemispherically shaped incense burner has a high-rising lid and a very shallow basin-like body that is mounted on four legs <Fig 76>. The beast legs with a distinctive appearance were cast separately and attached to the incense burner. Reminiscent of an incense burner discovered at the ancient site of the Tang Dynasty temple Qingshansi, this item must have been brought from Tang China or modeled on a Tang incense burner. The temple bell of Uncheong-dong <Fig 77> is equipped with a yongnyu, the dragon-shaped topknot, and a sound tube, two classical details of a Korean bell. On the body of the bell, a heavenly maiden enclosed inside a lotus frame is represented playing the lute and the flute with her clothes swept in the wind.

Among flagpole supports, the iron flagpole and stone supports of Gapsa Temple in Gongju and the flagpole supports at the ancient sites

Fig 77 Bronze bell excavated from Uncheon-dong, Cheongju

Fig 78 Iron flagpole of Gapsa Temple, Gongju





of Daetongsa and Mireuksa Temples are the most representative. While the iron flagpole of Gapsa was originally made up of twenty-eight interconnected iron tubes, only twenty-four of them remain at present. It is believed that four of them were destroyed by lightning in the thirtieth year of Joseon Gojong's reign (1893). The fine condition of preservation makes this iron flagpole and its stone supports highly valuable <Fig 78>.

## Namsan Mountain, the Open-air Museum of Buddhist Art

Along with the Seokguram Grotto, Namsan Mountain is one of the two most important Buddhist sites of Gyeongju <Fig 79>. In every valley or ravine of Namsan Mountain, there is an ancient temple site with pagodas and Buddhist statues. Close to thirty gorges and ridges exist around the two peaks of Namsan Mountain. The eastern and western halves of the mountain are often referred to as Eastern Namsan and Western Namsan; the former is steeper than the latter, which in turn is more extensive in area than the former. For this reason, most Buddhist sites are found in Western Namsan Mountain. Buddhist temples were created in Namsan Mountain starting in the seventh century, and by the ninth and tenth centuries, its ridges and valleys had become thronged with them. Thus far, nearly one hundred and forty sites have been identified, along with some one hundred

Fig 79 Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

Buddhist statues and dozens of pagodas. The inclusion of this treasure trove as one of the Gyeongju Historic Areas, as they were registered on the World Heritage list in 2000, was more than.

**Buddhist sites of Eastern Namsan Mountain**

Among the Buddhist statues in Eastern Namsan Mountain, the four-sided rock carved Buddha of Tapgol has received much attention for its sculptural magnificence <Fig 80>. Twenty Buddhist figures are sculpted on the four sides of a large rock standing close to 9 m tall. Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, heavenly creatures, and people carrying offerings to Buddha are carved across the rock surfaces, along with wooden pagodas of seven or nine stories and male and female lions in a harmonious arrangement. Traces of structures were identified in the area lying west of this rock where a recently restored three-story stone pagoda stands, indicating that a temple used to be there.

In Mireukgol Valley in Eastern Namsan Mountain, there is a massive seated Buddha, measuring 2.4 m in the height of the statue alone, excluding the throne and the halo <Fig 81>. This statue is known as the seated Buddha of Borisa Temple, a temple mentioned in *Samguk sagi* and *Donggyeong japgi* [Miscellaneous Records of the Eastern Capital]. However, whether today's Borisa Temple is the same temple mentioned in these books remains unclear. Complete with a halo and a throne, the statue has a nearly intact face. The hands assume the Bhumisparsha mudra, with the right hand held down beneath the bent knee. The halo with the Metamorphosed Buddha is lavishly decorated with floral and flame designs. The backside has a shallow bas-relief of the Bhaisajyaguru Medicine Buddha in a seated position. More than just a finely preserved Buddha, this statue is an admirable work of sculpture with expressive facial features and elegant details of the throne.

No discussion of Buddhist art in Eastern Namsan Mountain can be complete without the mention of the Buddha head discovered at the entrance of Cheorwagol Valley in 1959 in the wake of typhoon Sarah <Fig 82>. The colossal Buddha head measures over 150 cm in height and is surmounted by a tall usnisa, covered with curly hair, and succinctly rendered without much detail. The long almond-shaped eyes are matched with plump lips, and the chin is marked by a thickly incised crescent-curved line. Details of the ears are absent, suggesting the possibility that the sculpture was left incomplete.





Fig 80 Rock-carved Buddhas in Tapgok Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

Fig 81 Stone seated Buddha in Mireukgol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

Fig 82 Colossal Buddha head from Cheorwagol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

Another sculpture highly representative of Buddhist art in Eastern Namsan Mountain as well as overall Namsan Mountain is the Seven Buddha Rock of Bonghwagol Valley, a rock-craved sculpture with seven Buddha figures carved on four sides of a rock <Fig 83>. The main Buddha in the middle measures a whopping 2.66 m in height. A triad is carved on the wide, east-facing rock surface, with a Buddha sculpted on each of the four sides of a large rock column standing in front of it. The main Buddha of the triad is represented

Fig 83 Rock-carved Buddhas at Chilburam Hermitage in Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

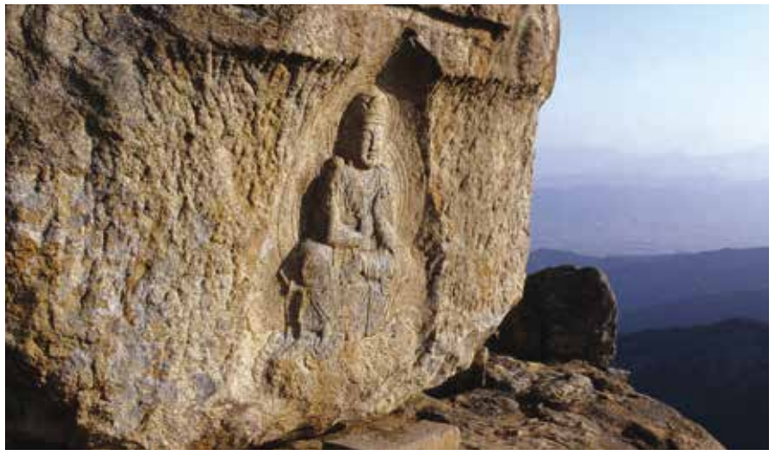


Fig 84 Rock-carved Bodhisattva at Sinseonam Hermitage in Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju





seated on a lotus throne, while the two attendant Bodhisattvas stand facing toward the main Buddha. The main Buddha's hands are positioned to form the *Bhumisparsha* mudra, popular in Silla around the time of the unification of the three kingdoms. As a work that harbingered the trend of four-sided statues, this rock-craved Buddha group is considered of great significance for the history of Buddhist sculpture in Silla.

Further uphill from the Seven Buddha Rock near the summit of the mountain is the rock-craved Bodhisattva of Sinseonam Hermitage <Fig 84>. This high-relief sculpture is inside a shallow niche created on a rock surface facing the southeast. The Bodhisattva is seated on a throne above a cloud, in a posture known as *yuhijwa* in which the left foot is placed in a comfortable position. Riding the cloud at a mountain summit that overlooks Gyeongju, this Bodhisattva exudes mysticism, as though she has just descended from the heavens.

**Buddhist sites of Western Namsan Mountain**

Western Namsan Mountain is far more densely dotted with Buddhist sculptures and pagodas than is Eastern Namsan Mountain. At the ancient site of Changnimsa Temple site at the western section of Namsan's base stands a three-story stone pagoda <Fig 85>. Inside this stone pagoda, a hand-transcribed copy of the *Great Dharani Sutra* was discovered along with a pagoda record carved on a copper plate. The name "Mugujeongtap," evidently referring to this pagoda, is mentioned in the record. Embodying the precepts in the Dharani Sutra, Mugujeongtap ("immaculate and pure pagodas") were popular around this time. The pagoda was constructed in the seventeenth year of King Munseong's reign (855). The characters on the gilt-bronze plate record are in Wang Xizhi's handwriting style and were sampled from various calligraphic works by him <Fig 86>.

In addition, there are sculptures of three Buddhas carved on an L-shaped rock face at Yuneulgol Valley <Fig 87>. The south-facing

Fig 85 Changnimsa Temple site at the western section of Namsan's base stands a three-story stone pagoda, Gyeongju

Fig 86 *Great Dharani sutra* carved on a gilt-bronze plate from pagoda of Changimsa Temple site, Gyeongju

surface has two Buddhas, and the west-facing one is craved with one Buddha. The inscription found near the left shoulder of the middle Buddha reads *Taehwa Eulmyo gu-nyeon* (太和乙卯九年), which has been interpreted to mean 835. However, the three Buddhas show a great deal of disparity in terms of sculptural techniques, suggesting the possibility that they were not created during the same time period.

A string of Buddhist statues are found in various places in the mountain valley of Samneunggol. One of them is a seated Buddha without a head <Fig 88>. The Buddha has been noted for the finely sculpted sashes tied into a knot on the left shoulder and below the chest. Further upslope lies a group of Buddhas carved in petroglyph on a rock cliff. The petroglyph, deployed over a large surface like a painting, represents six total Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The left side features a standing Buddha, accompanied by an attendant Bodhisattva, and the right side shows a seated Buddha and an attendant Bodhisattva in a standing position <Fig 89>. Petroglyphs of Buddhist figures started to be popularly produced from the late eighth century on. Aside from this one, the rock-craved Buddha of Bangeosan Mountain in Haman, Gyeongnam (801), mentioned earlier is a representative example of Buddhist petroglyphs.

The seated stone Buddha of Samneunggol Valley stands out for the well- developed shoulders and chest as well as the robust lower body <Fig 90>. The throne decorated with lotus petals is three-tiered. The middle





Fig 87 Rock-carved Buddhas in Yuneulgol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

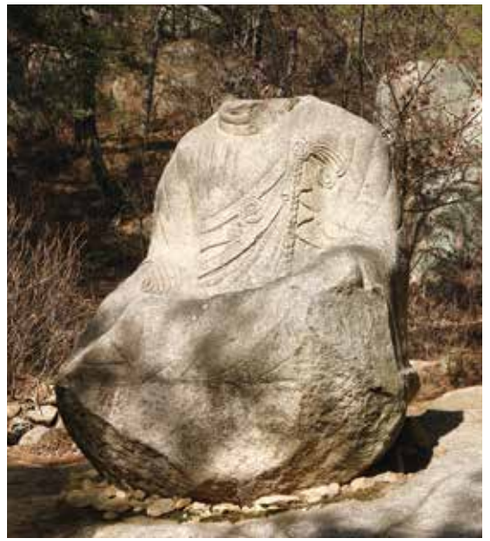


Fig 88 Stone seated Buddha in Samneunggol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

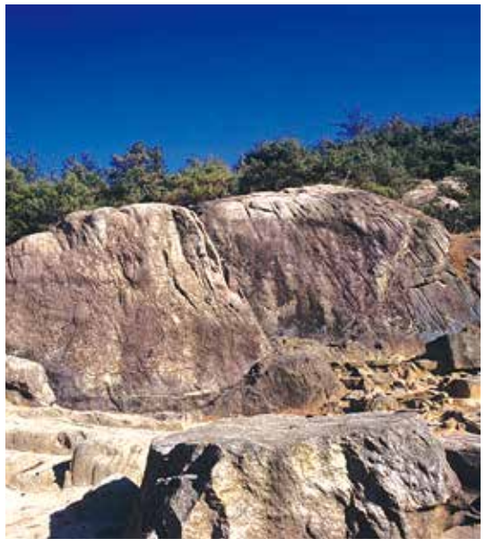


Fig 89 Petroglyphs of Buddhist figures in Samneunggol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

Fig 90 Stone seated Buddha in Samneunggol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

Fig 91 Bhaisajyaguru (medicine) Buddha Samneunggol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

tier is beveled at the edges of each facet in a style known as the table-leg style. Meanwhile, the seated Medicine Buddha of Samneunggol <Fig 91>, originally located at the summit of Samneunggol Valley like this statue, was later moved to the National Museum of Korea. Complete with a mandorla and a throne, this particular statue is in a nearly intact condition overall. The Medicine Buddha holds a bead in the right hand placed in front of the abdomen with the open palm facing upward. The middle tier of the three-tiered octagonal throne is carved with the images of an incense burner and a heavenly creature holding out offerings for Buddha.

At Sangseonam Rock at the summit of Samneunggol Valley is an enormous rock-carved Buddha <Fig 92>. Only the head of the Buddha is in bas-relief, and the rest is in petroglyph. This combination of bas-relief techniques with petroglyphs is not uncommon in large-size rock-carved Buddhas of the late Unified Silla. A similar example is provided by the rock-carved Buddha of Yaksugol Valley, standing over 8 m tall. The tallest Buddhist sculpture in Namsan, this Buddha is currently missing the head <Fig 93>.

Another valley in Western Namsan Mountain that is heavily crowded with Buddhist statues is Yongjanggol Valley. The seated stone Buddha and seated rock-carved Buddha of Yongjanggol Valley are located in this area <Fig 94>.





Fig 92 Rock-carved Buddha in Samneunggol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

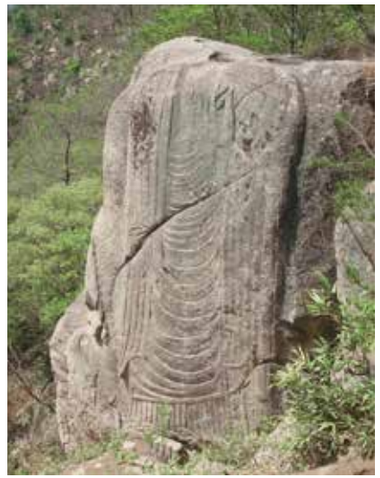


Fig 93 Rock-carved colossal Buddha in Yaksugol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

Fig 94 Stone seated Buddha in Yongjanggol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

Fig 95 Stone seated Buddha in Yeoramgol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju

The former is famous for the unusual throne consisting of three stone disks. Although the statue is missing the head, it has finely crafted details like the sashes tied into a knot over the left shoulder. The rock-carved Buddha is on a south-facing rock mass, located north of this seated Buddha.

Also worthy of mention is the seated stone Buddha of Yeoramgol Valley. This statue was originally found missing its head. Luckily, however, the head

was discovered in 2005, allowing the statue to be restored to the original appearance in 2007 <Fig 95>. The Buddha has a commanding presence with a well-built body, and the mandorla and the throne are provided with intricate sculptural details. The original throne is presumed to have been a three-tiered lotus throne, which has been repaired in recent years by adding the missing middle tier between the top plateau decorated with upward-pointing lotus petals and the bottom platform with downward-pointing petals.

Finally, at a distance of 30 m from this seated stone Buddha is a standing rock-carved Buddha <Fig 96>. The upper half of this Buddha with a rather

Fig 96 Rock-carved colossal Buddha in Yeoramgol Valley of Namsan Mountain, Gyeongju





large head compared to the body is sculpted in high relief, while the lower half is in bas-relief. The Buddha's feet rest upon a throne enveloped by five upward-pointing petals, sculpted in shallow relief. This sculpture was found toppled. Whatever the cause of the toppling, the Buddha came away unscathed, with facial details surprisingly intact. For this reason, it garnered the nickname the "Miracle of 5 cm."

The big and small rock-carved Buddhas, stone pagodas, and statues crowding Namsan Mountain of Gyeongju constitute an eloquent testimony to the glorious Buddhist culture of Silla. On occasions like Shakyamuni's birthday, all of these temples in Namsan Mountain must have been brightly illuminated by lanterns, turning the whole mountain into a splendid land of Buddhism.

## Bulguksa Temple and Seokguram Grotto

Bulguksa Temple was built in the tenth year of King Gyeongdeok's reign (751) by Kim Dae-seong. The legend surrounding the construction of Bulguksa Temple and the Seokguram Grotto is recounted in great detail in the "Hyoseon [Filial Piety and Virtuous Act]" chapter of *Samguk yusa*. According to the account provided there, Kim Dae-seong constructed Bulguksa Temple for his parents, and Seokbulsa Temple (today's Seokguram Grotto) for his parents in his previous life. Furthermore, he is said to have asked the monks Sillim and Pyohun to reside in each of these two temples. Given that *Samguk yusa* was written in the late thirteenth century, five hundred years after the construction of Bulguksa Temple and Seokguram, the accuracy of this account is open to debate. It does seem unquestionable, however, that the construction of these two Buddhist edifices was an act prompted by filial piety and intended as good deeds toward Buddha.

### Bulguksa Temple

Built on an elevated stone platform, Bulguksa Temple consists of two distinct spheres: Buddha's sphere above the platform and the human world below it. These two spheres are connected by bridges, the Cheongungyo, Baegungyo, Yeonhwagyo, and the Chilbogyo Bridge <Fig 97>. From the front, they appear as flights of stone steps leading to the world of Buddha. The Cheongungyo and Baegungyo Bridge connect to the Jahamun

Fig 97 Yeonhwagyo and Chilbogyo Bridges of Bulguksa Temple, Gyeongju

Gate, and the Yeonhwagyo and Chilbogyo to Anyangmun, the gate to Geungnakjeon or the Paradise Hall.

Buddha's world is again divided into three distinct areas. The area beyond the Jahamun Gate where Daeungjeon Hall is located corresponds to Samsara, the world of suffering in which Shakyamuni works to enlighten sentient beings through his teachings. The Paradise Hall area beyond the Anyangmun Gate is the Paradise where Amitabha Buddha resides. Finally, the Birojeon Hall area is the Land of the Lotus, the abode of Vairocana Buddha. Although it is unknown whether the temple was organized into these three areas at the time of its construction, judging from the respective location of the gilt bronze Vairocana and Amitabha, it appears that at least the Land of the Lotus and Paradise were designed as separate spaces from the outset.

In the current Daeungjeon Hall area, there are two pagodas, Seokgatap and Dabotap <Fig 99, 100>. Located west of Dabotap, Seokgatap contained significantly more relics than Dabotap. A variety of artifacts including a sarira holder were discovered inside the sarira niche on the second level of Seokgatap when the pagoda was disassembled for repair in 1966 <Fig 98>. Also, a gilt bronze outer casket was found in the middle of the sarira niche. Inside the outer casket, there was a silver bowl nested inside a lidded-bowl also made in silver. The silver bowl contained a green glass bottle, and around





Fig 98 *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light*

Fig 99 Seokgatap Pagoda of Bulguksa Temple, Gyeongju

Fig 100 Dabotap Pagoda of Bulguksa Temple, Gyeongju

it were a gilt bronze sarira casket and a copy of the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* <Fig 101> among other relics. Meanwhile, at the bottom of the platform of the outer casket, a large number of fragments of paper with ink-written text were found. Paper fragments, a hundred and ten in total, were analyzed using the latest imaging techniques and were revealed to be part of the Sutra of Casket Seal Dharani (Bohyeobin daranigyeong), four documents including the chronology of the repair of the Mugujeonggwang Pagoda of Bulguksa Temple (1024) and the chronology of the repair of the western pagoda of Bulguksa Temple (1038).

Thanks to these documents, we now know that Seokgatap, or the

Fig 101 Religuries from the three-story stone pagoda of Bulguksa Temple, Gyeongju

western pagoda, was disassembled and repaired twice during the Goryeo Dynasty in 1024 (fifteenth year of Hyeonjong's reign) and in 1038 (fourth year of Jeongjong's reign) due to the earthquake that struck Gyeongju. We also know that Seokgatap and Dabotap were originally called Seoseoktap and Mugujeonggwangtap, respectively. The *Great Dharani Sutra*, which has received the most attention of all items discovered inside Seokgatap, is believed to be the oldest surviving woodblock-printed book in the world. During the Unified Silla period, there was a popular belief that lodging a copy of the *Great Dharani Sutra* inside a pagoda and chanting certain incantations absolved even the worst of the sinners, allowing them to live a long life and, upon death, be reborn in Paradise and become a Buddha.

Modeled on the three-story pagodas of Gameunsa Temple site and Goseonsa Temple site , Seokgatap is free of unnecessary details and is better proportioned than the latter. This clean-cut eighth-century pagoda with an elegant silhouette is a masterpiece of its kind that served as a prototype for many pagodas that were built thereafter. The current finial was added in recent years and was modeled on the finial of the three-story pagoda of Silsangsa Temple (Treasure No. 37). Standing east of Seokgatap, Dabotap, or Mugujeonggwang Pagoda, is another masterpiece of Silla pagoda architecture. This magnificent pagoda is impressive for its intricate details that are carved with a bewildering precision and smoothness as though freely carved into a malleable material. In around 1925 when the pagoda was completely disassembled for repair by the Japanese, three of the four stone lion sculptures on the base went missing. These three lion sculptures are still accounted for.

During Imjinwaeran, the Japanese Invasion of 1592, Bulguksa Temple





Fig 102 Gilt-bronze seated Vairocuna Buddha of Bulguksa Temple, Gyeongju

Fig 103 Gilt-bronze seated Amitabha Buddha of Bulguksa Temple, Gyeongju

served as the gathering point for volunteer troops, but in 1593, the temple was severely damaged by fire. Roughly two decades later, in 1612, a major repair work began to restore the temple to the original shape. The fire had destroyed most Buddhist treasures of Bulguksa Temple, except the Yeonhwagyo, Chilbogyo, Cheongungyo, and the Baegungyo Bridges, a number of statues, and a handful of other items. Two gilt bronze statues that escaped unscathed are the seated Vairocana Buddha housed in Birojeon Hall and the seated Amitabha Buddha inside Geungnakjeon Hall <Fig 102, 103>. These two eponymous statues are counted among the three greatest gilt bronze Buddhist sculptures of Silla. The gilt bronze Vairocana, the physical incarnation of truth, appears solemn yet merciful. The garment folds are natural and fluid, and the drapery is highly realistic. The hands assume a position that is the inversion of the usual mudra of a Vairocana Buddha, with the left hand grabbing the right index. The gilt bronze Amitabha has an almost identical appearance to the gilt bronze Vairocana Buddha. This statue measuring 1.66 m in sitting height has a forbearing and compassionate expression, with the head held to face straight ahead. The eyebrows are crescent-shaped, nose-ridge high and well-defined. This sophisticated and realistic work of sculpture is amongst the most beautiful Buddha statues of the Unified Silla period.

### Seokguram Grotto

*Samguk yusa* refers to Seokguram as "Seokbulsa Temple." It was originally an independent temple, but is currently part of the Bulguksa Temple complex. The sculptures inside the grotto located at an eastern mid-slope of Tohamsan Mountain at an altitude of 565 m above sea level are masterpieces of Korean sculpture and its most cosmopolitan examples. This originally designed hermitage re-creates a miniature universe of Buddhism inside a grotto, fully reflecting its cosmology, and its beautiful and intricate sculptures emphatically embody the various ideals of this religion. Not only is Seokguram the crown jewel of Silla art, but it is also the shining symbol of the rich cultural and artistic heritage of Korea as a whole.

Constructed sometime between the mid- to late eighth century, Seokguram is carefully and methodically designed. Each of the thirty-eight sculptures present inside is unique and striking <Fig 104>. Granite found

Fig 104 Main seated Buddha and domed ceiling of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju





on the Korean peninsula is notoriously hard. As such, creating gigantic Buddhist grottos like those in India or China was quasi-impossible to do in Korea. However, someone who visited grotto temples in India or China must have suggested the idea of creating an artificial stone grotto, so Silla people opted for creating a manmade grotto, a task that far exceeded in difficulty that of a stone cave. Indeed, the construction, begun in 751, lasted over two decades. Aside from the fact that it is a manmade grotto, Seokguram is also unprecedented in its design. A stone edifice with a circular plan and a domed ceiling found on Seokguram have never been encountered anywhere in East Asia. The circular plan was chosen for the main sanctuary for worshippers to contemplate the Buddha statue placed in the middle from all around it.

The originality of Seokguram is not limited to its design. A pantheon of forty Buddhist deities including Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, disciples, and divine guardians are placed in various places throughout the grotto according to their rank in the Buddhist hierarchy. In terms of sculptural style, one can sense the influence of Chinese sculpture from the prosperous Tang Dynasty. However, the quality of execution is hardly comparable; Seokguram sculptures far surpass the Chinese sculptures in terms of sophistication as well as a wealth of details.

The eight bas-reliefs adorning the left and right walls of the antechamber represent the eight guardian deities of Buddhism in a standing position, including Deva, Naga, Yaksha, Asura, Gandharva, Garuda, Kimnara, and Mahoraga <Fig 105>; they are the low-level deities whose role is to protect the Dharma. In stone pagodas, they are generally sculpted on the base section. Likewise, the eight guardian deities are placed in the outer section of Seokguram, in reflection of their rank in the Buddhist hierarchy, to guard the sacred space.

Meanwhile, the corridor leading from the antechamber to the circular sanctuary is flanked at its entry point by two sculptures of Vajrapani, also in a standing position <Fig 106>. *Vajrapani* (*Geumgangyeoksa*) is the guardian of Gautama Buddha from Gandhara and was originally represented holding a vajra scepter. After the introduction of this deity in China, however, the iconographic details changed significantly. *Vajrapani* was now represented wearing a tall topknot, with the vajra scepter frequently omitted. In Seokguram, one with an open mouth and another with a closed mouth are paired together. The simple depiction of bodily details, coupled with a lively

Fig 105 Eight guardian deities of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju

Fig 106 Vajrapani of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju

Fig 107 Four Heavenly Kings of Seokguram Grotto (from left Northen & Eastern Kings), Gyeongju





facial expression, help communicate energy and vitality.

On the walls on either side of the corridor are the bas-reliefs of the Four Heavenly Kings, two on each wall <Fig 107>. In the Buddhist cosmology, the Four Heavenly Kings are deities protecting the mid-slope of Sumeru Mountain. After the iconographic evolution occurred in the course of Buddhism's journey through China, the Four Heavenly King became dressed in an armor suit. Vaisravana (Damuncheon) in the north holds a minature pagoda in one hand, while all others are represented with swords.

Meanwhile, the entrance to the circular sanctuary is guarded by the bas-reliefs of Maha Brahmana (Beomcheon) and Devanam Indra (Jeseokcheon). Maha Brahmana is a deity residing in the Form Realm, a realm above the Desire Realm and below the Formless Realm. He is represented holding a kundika, which symbolizes pure penance, in the left hand <Fig 108>. Devanam Indra is a deity dwelling in the heavenly palace at the summit of Sumeru, which is the second heaven from the bottom in the Desire Realm. Devanam Indra is shown holding a vajra scepter, which symbolizes lightning <Fig 109>. Maha Brahmana and Devanam Indra are accompanied by Manjusri and Samantabhadra Bodhisattvas. Important Bodhisattvas in

Fig 108 Maha Brahmana of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju

Fig 109 Sakra Devanam Indra of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju

Fig 110 Buddhist monks of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju

Mahayana Buddhism, Manjusri and Samantabhadra symbolize wisdom and the practice of Buddhist values, respectively. One of them holds a scripture, and the other a round goblet. However, scholarly opinion is currently divided as to which of the two is Manjusri and which Samantabhadra. In any case, these bas-reliefs are graceful representations of the two Bodhisattvas, standing on a lotus blossom and dressed in flowing robes, with their bodies turned slightly in the direction of the main Buddha.

The wall inside the sanctuary is adorned with ten bas-reliefs representing Buddhist monks, with five of them positioned to the left and five others to the right <Fig 110>. Many have exotic facial features and are dressed in Indian-style clothes. They are also represented holding an incense burner or a receptacle resembling an alms bowl. Because there are ten of them, some conjecture that these monks are the Ten Principal Disciples of Shakyamuni. However, others contend that they are simply venerable monks like the ones represented in the Longmen Grottoes in China.

The main Buddha of Seokguram sits slightly in retreat from the center of the round sanctuary. The Buddha alone measures 340 cm in height, with the throne measuring an additional 160 cm for a total height of 5 m <Fig 111>.

Buddha is seated in a lotus position on a throne in a popular style from Unified Silla, consisting of a top plateau decorated with upward-pointing





Fig 111 Main seated Buddha of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju

lotus petals and a bottom plateau decorated with downward-pointing lotus petals, with an octagonal socle between the two plateaus. His right hand touches the ground, assuming the Bhumisparsa mudra. The sculpture is so full of intricate details and so perfectly proportioned that it is hard to believe that the sculpture was carved out of granite. The aureola is not attached directly to the head as is the case with most Buddha statues, but is carved into the wall behind. There is much controversy surrounding the identity of this Buddha, with Shakyamuni, Amitabha, and Vairocana as the chief candidates. However, one can also see this statue as transcending these specific names and as a visual incarnation of being itself. All the while finely underscoring the human and physical aspects of Buddha, the sculpture succeeds in making his transcendental being emerge.

Straight behind the main Buddha, farthest in retreat from the entrance of the sanctuary is the bas-relief of the eleven-headed Avalokitesvara <Fig 112>. The eleven-head Avalokitesvara is an iconography of Avalokitesvara, which emphasizes this Bodhisattva's role in seeing and understanding the various circumstances facing sentient beings and saving them in a manner appropriate

Fig 112 Eleven-headed Avalokitesvara of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju

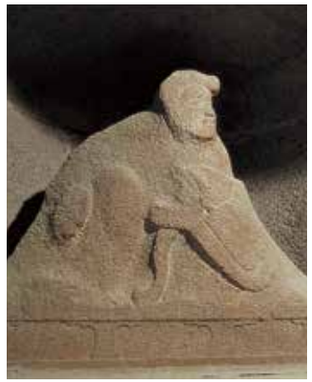


Fig 113 Vimalakirti and Manjusri Bodhisattva of Seokguram Grotto, Gyeongju

to their individual circumstances. The curved wall of this round sanctuary has ten niches, inside each of which is lodged a seated statue. Currently, however, two of the niches are vacant. The two niches on either side of the main Buddha's halo house the seated sculptures of Vimalakirti (Yumageosa) and Manjusri (Munsubosal), placed facing each other. The rest of the niches are occupied by Avalokitesvara (Gwaneumbosal), Vajrapani Bodhisattva (Geumgangsubosal), and Kshitigharba (Jijangbosal) among others <Fig 113>.

This solemn and majestic assembly of Buddhist figures renders Seokguram a sublime sphere wherein worldly human concerns vanish before a powerful manifestation of religious ideals. Seokguram is indeed among the greatest masterpieces of East Asian Buddhist art.

## Zen Buddhism and Buddhist Art

In late Silla, there were fierce battles for the crown among the Gyeongju-based jingol aristocrats. Accompanying the conflict was the emergence of a new intelligentsia formed by people belonging to the highest echelon of Silla's social hierarchy. Meanwhile, local potentates were progressively moving to form independent powers. In Buddhism, there was a wave of soul-searching in non-Zen Buddhist orders, focused on scriptures and theories, such as Hwaom Buddhism, while the practice-based Zen Buddhist schools gained popularity. Compared to non-Zen Buddhism, Zen Buddhism





was more personal and down-to-earth as well as more progressive. Scriptures were secondary in this branch of Buddhism in which the main route to enlightenment was meditation, considered a means to reach one's true inner Buddha. Through its alliance with powerful local clans, Zen Buddhism gained ground, and sponsored by local clans, Zen Buddhist temples tended to be located far away from the royal capital.

The relationship between a mentor and a disciple was considered extremely important in Zen Buddhism. As a result, Zen monks commonly erected stupas and stupa steles to honor the memories of their mentors. Moreover, as mediation superseded the adoration of Buddha in importance, the creation of Buddhist statues became relegated as a non-essential activity among Zen Buddhists. The few statues they created were mostly of Vairocana Buddha, the deity worshipped in Huayan Buddhism with which Zen Buddhism shared certain doctrinal affinities. Only one such Vairocana has survived, unfortunately. It is located at Borimsa Temple.

Major examples of Zen Buddhist temples in the Yeongnam region include Unmunsa Temple in Cheongdo, Ssanggyesa Temple in Hadong, Bongamsa Temple in Mungyeong, and Bongnimsa Temple in Changwon. These temples most often have pagodas, stupas, and stupa steles on their grounds. These stone monuments are generally well preserved and are invaluable sources for epigraphic research. The most representative Buddhist relics of Unmunsa are the eastern and western pagodas located outside its Daeungbojeon Hall <Fig 114>. These identically shaped three-story pagodas are mounted on a two-tiered base. Though the bas-reliefs of the Eight Guardian Deities at the upper tier of the pagoda base remain quite sharp, some of them were retouched during the Japanese colonial period. The five-tiered socle beneath the roof stone, finished mostly in straight lines, appears tidy and elegant. And similar to the three-story stone pagoda at the ancient site of Chamgnimsa Temple in Gyeongju, this pagoda adds bas-reliefs to an otherwise typical pagoda of the Unified Silla period.

At Ssanggyesa Temple of Hadong-gun, Gyeongnam, a stele dedicated to the master Jingam (*Hyeso* 774-850) has survived from the Unified Silla period <Fig 115>. Master Jingam studied Buddhism in Tang China and, upon his return to Silla, garnered much respect from the kings. He popularized fanbai, the Chinese Buddhist liturgical chant, in Silla. When master Jingam passed, King Heongang bestowed upon him the posthumous title *Ssanggye*, ordering Choe Chi-won to compose an epitaph, one of the four epitaphs he composed.

Fig 114 West three-story stone pagoda of Unmunsa Temple, Cheongdo

Fig 115 Stele for master Jingam at Ssanggyesa Temple, Hadong

Fig 116 Stele for Buddhist monk Jijeung at Bongamsa Temple, Mungyeong

Fig 117 Stele for Buddhist monk Jingyeong from Bongnimsa Temple site, Changwon

Bongamsa Temple in Mungyeong was a major temple of the Huiyangsan Mountain School, founded by Great Master Jijeung (Doheon 824-882). The stupa erected in his honor is octagonal, a standard style for this type of





stone monument at that time. The stupa is paired with a stupa stele bearing a chronology that relates his life and work <Fig 116>, composed circa 893 (seventh year of Queen Jinseong's reign), while the stupa stele itself was erected in 924 (first year of King Gyeongae's reign). Along with the Jingam stele, this stele is famous for its epitaph, also composed by Choe Chi-won.

Bongnimsa Temple in Changwon, founded by Great Master Jingyeong (Simhui 855-923), was the main temple of the Bongnimsan Mountain School. The founder's stupa and the accompanying stupa stele are currently on display at the National Museum of Korea <Fig 117>. The stele was erected in 924 (eighth year of King Gyeongmyeong's reign), and the epitaph was composed personally by the king. The classical, octagonally shaped stupa is presumed to have been created around the same time as the stele.

Among Zen Buddhist temples located in the Gyeonggi and Gangwon region, those with noteworthy relics and artworks include Heungbeopsa in Wonju, Jinjeonsa Temple and Seonnimwon Temple in Yangyang, Gulsansa Temple in Gangneung, and Godalsa Temple in Yeoju. Doui who lived in retreat at Jinjeonsa Temple in Yangyang was the first monk to transmit Zen Buddhism in Silla. He was initiated into Zen Buddhism in China in 784 (fifth year of King Seongdeok's reign) and returned to Silla in 821. After he failed to gain acceptance for Zen Buddhism at a time when non-Zen Buddhism was at the peak of its influence, he retired to Jinjeonsa, where he stayed for forty years until his death. Doui mentored Monk Yeomgeo (?~844) whose stupa is found in the precincts of Jinjeonsa along with that of the former. The stupa of Doui <Fig 118> is a small octagonal stupa resting on a square stone base and is one of the oldest structures of its kind. It is presumed to have been built sometime in the mid- ninth century as a pioneer in the Korean stone stupa tradition. The transition toward a fully octagonal stupa occurred gradually thereafter.

The first stupa with all octagonal elements is the stupa of Monk Yeomgeo, which is said to have been originally located in Heungbeopsa Temple <Fig 119>. Monk Yeomgeo was based in Okseongsa Temple, a temple located in Seoraksan Mountain, and championed Zen Buddhism until his passing in 844. The stupa contained a gilt bronze plate inscribed with the date and circumstance of its construction. In addition, this octagonal stupa stands on a three-tiered socle. The bottom tier is carved with lions, the middle tier with incense burners and floral motifs, and the top tier with lotus petals. The body of the stupa is sculpted with the Four

Heavenly Kings and a door-like design. The roof stone is provided with details like the roof rafters under the eaves and roof tiles. Examples of similar stupas with only slight variations on this model include the stupas of Godalsa Temole (currently the stupa of Great Master Wonjong Hyejin), Seollimwon site, and Gulsansa Temple.

At the ancient site of Seollimwon site in Yangyang-gun, Gangwon-do,

Fig 118 Stupa of master Doui at Jinjeonsa Temple site, Yangyang

Fig 119 Stupa of Buddhist monk Yeomgeo from Heungbeopsa Temple site, Wonju

Fig 120 Stele for master Honggak at Seollimwon Temple site, Yangyang

Fig 121 Fragment of bronze bell of Seollimwon site, Yangyang





a series of Buddhist structures and artifacts have survived, ranging from the stupa stele of Master Honggak and a three-story stone pagoda to stone lanterns. The stupa of Seollimwon site, commemorating the life and work of Master Honggak (814-880), was erected in 886 (first year of King Jeonggang's reign) <Fig 120>. Unfortunately, however, only a few fragments of the stupa stele remain at this site.

The temple bell of Seollimwon site was severely damaged when the temple was consumed by fire during the Korean War while it was in the custody of Woljeongsa Temple in nearby Odaesan Mountain <Fig 121>. The bell is nevertheless of inestimable value for the inscription in Idu carved on either side of it. The inscription relates that the bell was cast in 804 under the supervision of a monk from Yeongmyosa Temple, Gyeongju, thanks to financing provided by influential local clans. Compared to eighth-century temple bells, this one is significantly smaller in size, in accordance with the new trend toward smaller bells at the time.

Gulsansa Temple in Gangneung was famously known as the main temple of the Sagulsan Mountain School. The temple was constructed in 847 (ninth year of King Munseong's reign) by the National Preceptor Beomil. On the ancient grounds of Gulsansa Temple stands a stupa built in homage to Beomil (?-889). This site also has the oldest and the largest surviving flagpole supports in Korea <Fig 122>. The two stone columns stand 504 m tall at a distance of 1 m from each other. Made of two natural rocks that were barely hewn, these flagpole supports impress the beholder with their rugged and massive beauty.

Fig 122 Flagpole supports at Gulsansa Temple site, Gangneung

The Honam and Hoseo region is also home to quite a number of historic Zen Buddhist temples

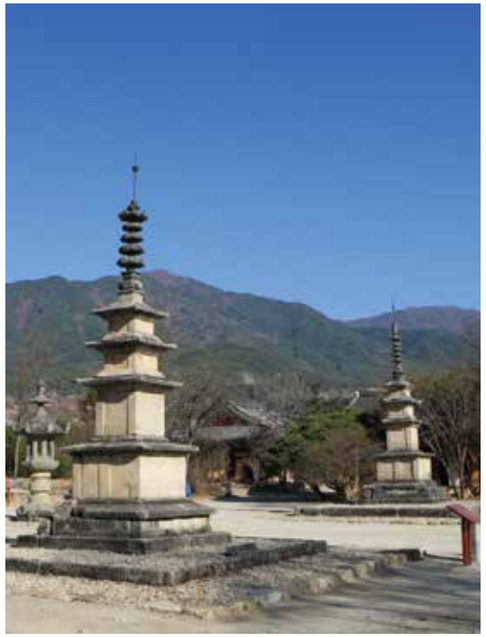


Fig 123 East three-story stone pagoda of Silsangsa Temple, Namwon

Fig 124 Three-story stone pagoda at Baekjangam Hermitage of Silsangsa Temple, Namwon

of the likes of Silsangsa, Seongjusa, Wolgwangsa, Taeansa, Borimsa, and Ssangbongsa Temple. Of the various Zen schools of Buddhism based in this region, the Silsangsan Mountain School was the first to be founded. The school was headquartered at Silsangsa Temple in Namwon, and Great Master Jeunggak Hongcheok was its founding father.

At Silsangsa Temple, a large array of Buddhist structures and relics has survived, including the two three-story stone pagodas, another three-story pagoda in Baekjangam Hermitage, and an iron seated Buddha. The east and west stone pagodas, situated outside Bogwangjeon Hall, are counted among the most valued Buddhist treasures of this temple, along with the associated stone lanterns <Fig 123>. Their intact finials make these pagodas yet more valuable. The three-story stone pagoda of Baekjangam Hermitage <Fig 124> is similar to them insofar as it has a single-tier base, consists of three levels, and is surmounted by a finial. However, the Baekjangam pagoda has a much shorter base, and its design is somewhat peculiar in that the first level is taller than the two other levels. The second and the third levels are





Fig 125 Iron seated Buddha of Silsangsa Temple, Namwon

identical in width and height. The main body of the pagoda is carved on its surfaces with a Bodhisattva, Divine Guardians, and heavenly creatures, as well as a parapet. Moreover, the exposed area of the underside of the roof stone is sculpted with lotus flowers and a Buddha triad.

Inside Yaksajeon Hall of Silsangsa Temple, there is a massive iron seated Buddha standing close to 270 cm <Fig 125>. The iron Buddha was made by joining together separately cast parts. During the later part of the Unified Silla period, iron Buddhas were popular fixtures at Zen Buddhist temples outside the capital area. This statue is in a classical style, quite faithfully embodying the characteristics of ninth-century Buddhist sculptures.

Also noteworthy are the stupa of Great Master Jeunggak Hongcheok, the founder of the Silsangsan Mountain School which was the largest Zen

Fig 126 Stupa of Buddhist monk Jeunggak at Silsangsa Temple, Namwon

Fig 127 Stele for Buddhist monk Nanghye at Seongjusa Temple site, Boryeong

school in Silla, and the accompanying stupa stele. The octagonal stupa, created in the mid-ninth century, is in a popular style of this period <Fig 126>. The stupa stele is missing the main body, with only its tortoise socle and dragon-sculpted capstone remaining. The title “Eungnyotapbi” is carved at the front center of the capstone.

At the ancient site of Seongjusa Temple in Boryeong, a stupa belonging to Monk Nanghye <Fig 127> is found along with four stone pagodas. The inscription on this stupa recounts how the family of Monk Nanghye, originally of the jingol class, fell to the yukdupum class during his father’s time. Consequently, the stupa was considered crucial for understanding Silla’s aristocratic rank system. The text was composed by Choe Chi-won and written by his cousin Choe In-yeon. The stele itself is presumed to have been erected sometime thereafter.

Borimsa Temple, the head temple of the Gajisan Mountain School of





Fig 128 East and west three-story stone pagodas of Borimsa Temple, Jangheung

Zen Buddhism, houses a pair of twin pagodas and a seated iron Vairocana Buddha assuming the fist of wisdom mudra, along with several stone lanterns. The twin pagodas are typical Silla pagodas consisting of three main levels mounted on a two- tiered base Complete with the original finial, they are of great historical value <Fig 128>. Furthermore, the pagodas contain their construction record inside a niche. The record for the north pagoda states that it was built in the fifth month of the tenth year of King Gyeongmun’s reign (870). The pagoda is said to have been constructed at the king’s initiative to pray for the late king Heoan’s rebirth in Paradise. In the ninth century, Silla kings frequently sponsored the construction of a Buddhist temple or a worship hall within an existing temple to pray for the peace of the souls of the deceased members of the royal family. The seated iron Buddha located in Daejeokgwangjeon Hall represents Vairocana, identifiable by the distinctive mudra in which the left index is wrapped up inside the right hand <Fig 129>. The inscription on the backside of the left arm relates that the statue was created in the second year of King Heonan’s reign (858) on the initiative and funding of Kim Su-jong, a military official of Muju and Jangsa (today’s Gwangju and Jangheung).

Fig 129 Iron seated Vairocana Buddha of Borimsa Temple, Jangheung

A stupa belonging to Master Bojo Chejing is also found on the grounds of Borimsa Temple, together with the associated stupa stele <Fig 130>. After Master Chejing returned from Tang China, he was called upon by the king to become the head monk of Borimsa Temple in 859 (third year of King Heonan's reign>. He resided in this temple until his death at the age of seventy-seven years. The king bestowed upon him the posthumous title "Master Bojo" and simultaneously named his stupa "Changseong." The stele was constructed in 884 (tenth year of King Heongang's reign>, and the octagonal stupa is in a popular late Unified Silla style.

Finally, in Ssangbongsa Temple in Hwasun, the stupa of Master Cheolgam (Doyun ?~868) has survived together with a stupa stele <Fig 131>. Ssangbongsa was constructed by Master Cheolgam, who had just returned from his studious stay in Tang China. Thereafter, he resided in this temple until his death at the age of seventy-one. The stupa stele is particularly renowned, as many consider it the most accomplished example of stone monuments of its kind. The classic, octagonally shaped stupa is presumed to have been built around the time of Master Cheolgam passing in 868 (eighth





Fig 130 Stupa and stele for master Bojo at Borimsa Temple, Jangheung

Fig 131 Stupa and stele for master Cheolgam at Ssangbongsa Temple, Hwasun

year of King Gyeongmun's reign). The stele is currently missing the main pillar, with only its tortoise base and dragon-sculpted capstone remaining. The capstone is carved at the front center with the title "Ssangbongsango Cheolgam seonsa bimyeong."

# 5 Confucianism and Literature

## Confucianism

Confucianism, a system of philosophical and socio-political thought in which *in*(仁/*ren*) or benevolence is the utmost value, had long been a dominant ideology in pre-modern societies on the Korean peninsula. As such, it holds the key to understanding these societies.

It is not precisely known how and when Confucianism, which emerged in China during the Spring and Autumn period, was transmitted to Korea. Its transmission is generally viewed to have been concurrent with that of the Chinese writing system, either during the Gojoseon or the Three Kingdoms Period. However, this is a mere conjecture, unsupported by any concrete evidence. The strong sociopolitical bent in this system of thought necessitates a society that is mature enough to make appropriate uses of Confucianism. In other words, even if Confucianism had been known of since early on, ancient societies before the emergence of nation-states could not have benefited from it. As such, it is more reasonable to assume that Confucianism only became a sociopolitically relevant system of thought in Korean societies during the Three Kingdoms period.

In Silla, the least advanced and developed of the Three Kingdoms, Confucianism gained ground after its two neighbors had already adopted its tenets. Although Silla is presumed to have acquired the sociopolitical





conditions suitable for the acceptance of Confucianism toward the late fourth century, there is no evidence that it was actually accepted around this time in any manner. There is, however, some concrete evidence that attests to the transmission of Confucianism in Silla from the sixth century on. As such, it is safer to consider that Confucianism was embraced in Silla at this point in time. The sixth century was a period during which Silla was rapidly shedding the aspects of a tribal confederacy to become a centralized monarchy with a powerful aristocratic class. This social atmosphere is propitious for a proper acceptance of Confucianism, which must have gradually laid roots in Silla society over time. Initially, the understanding of Confucianism in Silla was extremely superficial, deepening only when internal political conditions became ripe for the adoption of Confucian ideology. Under such conditions, the knowledge of Confucianism rapidly gained in depth and breadth. Two triggering events were the proclamation of Silla's first laws in the seventh year of King Beopheung's rule (520) and the recognition of Buddhism as the official religion in the fifteenth year of the same reign (528).

The written laws enacted by King Beopheung in appearance for making Buddhist precepts into the governing principles of Silla society were, in reality, a means to realize the Confucian ideal of in (ren). The main goal was to counter the arbitrary rule by a monarch and prevent aristocrats and officials from exploiting the peasantry. Considering how the enactment of Silla's first written laws coincided with the burgeoning framework for a centralized rule, it is not surprising that these laws were imbued with such ideals. It is a well-established fact, for instance, that the epigraph on the Bongpyeong stele (524) in Uljin is related to *Noinbeop*, Silla's slave law. The phrase *Hoekjoeeocheon ('committing sins against the heavens')* appearing at the end of this text and which is likely a quote taken from Lunyu, is suggestive of Confucian influence on Silla's early legal system.

Meanwhile, the recognition of Buddhism as the official religion is an event rich in concrete implications related to Confucianism. In order to understand the notoriously abstruse texts of Buddhist scriptures, one needs an advanced level of reading proficiency in Chinese characters. The apprenticeship in Chinese characters naturally initiates the learners into Confucianism, which is the basic undercurrent in most Chinese texts. Confucianism, therefore, developed in Silla together with, and within the religious framework of, Buddhism rather than competing with it. A key piece of evidence to this effect is the epigraph on the Cheonjeon-ri stele

in Ulju dating from 535. This epigraph records the visit by a monk named Angeup, accompanied by young novice monks and several scholars. Those referred to as scholars were probably people who studied under Angeup. In other words, these scholars were initiated to a new system of thought known as Confucianism by a Buddhist monk.

The involvement of Buddhist monks in the spread of Confucianism is also evidenced by the circumstances surrounding the compilation of *Guksa* [History of the Nation], Silla's first history book. The compilation of Guksa was carried out because of a proposal by Isabu who served as the regent during the early part of Jingheung's reign when the king was still a young child. The actual compilation was overseen by a certain Geochilbu, who had been a monk in his youth and thus acquired literacy and learnedness sufficient to handle this project. Geochilbu recruited writers for this project, and the process was also influenced by his past experience as a Buddhist monk. The goal behind *Guksa* was to record the good and bad deeds of the various past monarchs and their officials so that they may serve as examples for the posterity, an idea thoroughly Confucian. When the pool of writers recruited for the project reached a certain size, they underwent training, and the instructors in charge of the training were mostly Buddhist monks. Also relevant is the fact that Buddhist monks were included in the team of teachers for Hwarangdo, Silla's youth elite system that was created to foster future leaders.

Following the recognition of Buddhism as the state religion, Confucianism experienced rapid growth, benefiting from the increasing influence of this religion, a fact to which two steles erected in 568 (twenty-ninth year of King Jinheung's reign), Hwanchoryeong stele and Maunnyeong stele, attest. These steles, built within two months of each other, have an identical text engraved on them. The text describing King Jinheung's tour of borderland regions lists the names of the members of his retinue including two Buddhist monks. Interestingly, the names of the two monks are cited before any others. The first half of the text is mostly composed of quotes from the Confucian classic *Shujing*, expressing ideals of monarchic rule. It is clear, therefore, that Buddhist monks served as advisors to King Jinheung, quoting appropriate passages of Confucian scriptures to help him rule according to Confucian ideals. As a matter of fact, no rivalry existed at that time between Buddhism and Confucianism, which actually complemented each other.

Confucianism continued to gain ground alongside Buddhism. Buddhism's influence on the ruling ideology grew further, as Silla kings embraced





Chakravarti raja as the ideal of a monarch and perceived the Shakya as the model of Silla people. This benefited Confucianism, making its role larger and more important in Silla's monarchy. Moreover, any expansion of government structures necessarily brought Confucianism to the fore. Some aristocrat officials started to adopt Confucian-style names. Kim Hu-jik, the name of the official in charge of military affairs in King Jinpyeong's court, is a case in point. Not coincidentally, Kim Hu-jik is recorded to have been unafraid to point out the mistakes King Jinpyeong made, frequently quoting from Shujing. What this clearly suggests is that Confucianism had already thoroughly penetrated Silla's government and governing principles. Statesmen of later eras such as Kim Chun-chu and Kim Yu-sin, who were the champions of the unification of the three kingdoms, also had Confucian-style names. The influence of Confucianism only grew more significant over time.

The story of Gangsu bears great testimony to the increasing sway of Confucianism. A man from Imna Gara, Gangsu was a man of Daegaya origin whose ancestors pledged loyalty to the Silla crown and settled in the Jungwon area. When Gangsu came of age and began his scholarly pursuit, his father asked which he would choose between Buddhism and Confucianism. Gangsu answered that he preferred Confucianism, which dealt with the real world, to Buddhism, which was concerned only with otherworldly matters. This interaction is a measure of how Confucianism had already attained a status comparable to that of Buddhism by the early seventh century.

he story of the monk Wongwang is also enlightening. Before he entered the Buddhist priesthood, Wongwang was already well versed in Taoism and Confucianism. In 589, the year he turned twenty-five years old, Wongwang went to the Chen, one of the southern Chinese dynasties, where he became a Buddhist monk. Unlike Gangsu, Wongwang ultimately chose Buddhism after having been initiated into Confucianism. However, his case does reveal is that opportunities to become familiarized with Confucianism were already widely available in Silla at that time. Upon his return to Silla in 600, Wongwang was warmly welcomed by King Jinpyeong, and not long after, Wongwang was called upon by two young men named Gwisan and Chuhang to provide them with lifelong precepts they could follow. The *Sesok ogye* [Five Precepts for Secular Life], which he drafted for them, echos many Confucian values. There are of course precepts that obviously draw on Buddhism. *Salsaengyutaek*, for example, prescribes the use of judgment and discernment when killing.

However, most others emphasize virtues that are Confucian in essence, such as loyalty to the monarch, filial piety, and faithfulness. Although originally drafted for the two young men, *Sesok ogye* became widely accepted as a code of ethics to be respected by all in Silla. As society expanded rapidly and a more complex network of social relationships formed within it, these Confucian values prescribing deference and fidelity increasingly gained in importance; Confucianism was precisely the ideological system that the society of this period needed. By providing the guidelines necessary to maintain order in Silla's society undergoing fundamental changes in the sixth to seventh centuries, Confucianism was able to quickly emerge as a dominant system of sociopolitical thought.

As evident in the Pledge Stone of the Imsin Year—presumed to be 612—bearing the pledge by two young men to master classics like *Shijing*, *Shujing*, *Liji*, and *Chunqiu* [Spring and Autumn Annals], Confucian scriptures were widely read in Silla at that time. The pledge gives a measure of just how deeply Confucianism came to inform Silla's society as the arbiter of social norms. It is certainly not a coincidence that Yebu, the royal cabinet ministry overseeing national rites and education, was also established around this time. he rapid rise of Confucianism was met with resistance from those who feared that the new system of thought might endanger traditional social norms. Bidam's Uprising in 647, for example, was a political clash between those who defended the Buddhism-driven ruling system and those who championed a Confucian monarchy. This conflict ended with the latter emerging victorious, causing a definitive shift in Silla's political landscape toward Confucianism. Kim Chun-chu, who led the Confucian-leaning group to victory, believed that new types of leaders were needed for Silla to forge ahead into a new era. He was therefore keenly interested in Gukhak as an elite educational institution replacing Hwarangdo. As Confucianism now claimed the place of the ruling ideology previously held by Buddhism, a new generation of officials educated in Confucianism were brought in to compose the government.

## Literature

Although no one knows exactly when the Korean language was first formed and spoken, oral literature in Korean must have existed long before the writing was introduced. The transmission of oral literature, however, was eventually completely interrupted, and a few stories and poems that did manage to survive were recorded in written form only centuries later. This is also how Silla's literature survived to the present. The literature of Silla may be divided into roughly three genres: hyangga, the first fixed form of poetry in Korean history, legends written down in later eras, and Sino-Korean classical literature.





### Hyangga, the First Fixed-form Poetry

*Hyangga* is a musical poetic genre that existed between the sixth century and the tenth century, from Silla to early Goryeo. The oldest song recorded is *Dosolga* from the time of King Yuri, the third ruler of Silla (first century AD), whose lyrics are completely unknown. Given that this song was described as marking the beginning of court music, hyangga must have emerged around this time to flourish later in the seventh to eighth centuries. Hyangga renders Korea a place among a handful of countries with literary works in their native languages dating from prior to the tenth century. The first fixed-form poetry ever to emerge in Korean literature, hyangga can consist of four, eight, or ten lines. All hyangga poems appearing in *Samguk yusa* have an associated legend explaining their backgrounds, and for this reason, their historical significance as well as their literary value as epic poems is immeasurable.

Although written in hyangchal, a writing system transcribing Korean in Chinese characters, hyangga are Korean-language poems insofar as the transcription is solely phonetic. Notwithstanding, due to the current dearth of knowledge about ancient Korean, hyangga are not always easy to decipher. The oldest written Korean text is Hunminjeongeum, dating from the fifteenth century. Although Hunminjeongeum records medieval Korean, spoken several centuries after the last hyangga would have been composed, scholars frequently refer to this document when deciphering hyangga in the absence of older records.

Written records mention an anthology of hyangga, named Samdaemok, compiled by Wihong and Daegu hwasang of Silla, but nothing is known about it except the title. The only Silla hyangga that have survived to the present are the fourteen pieces included in *Samguk yusa*. Otherwise, there are eleven early-Goryeo hyangga composed by the monk Gyunyeo that are part of a song cycle titled "Bohyeon sibwonga [Songs on Ten Wishes of Buddhist Sages]" included in *Gyunyeojeon* [Life of Gyunyeo].

Hyangga may also be divided according to the theme: (1) court hyangga, (2) songs on devotional life, (3) songs about the vanity of life, (4) wayfaring songs, and (5) love songs. The surviving hyangga are classified in the table below in chronological order, with the names of their attributed authors, if known. It is believed that Hyangga were composed by Silla people of all walks of life from the king to the elderly and women. However, scholarly opinion is rather divided concerning their authorship. It should also be noted that many of the titles were given by today's historians, not drawn from historical records.

<Table 1> Hyangga of the *Samkuk yusa*

| Title | Century | Reign | Attributed author or special characteristics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Seodongyo [Song of Seodong] | 6th century | Jinpyeong (circa 600) | Seodong (King Mu of Baekje), orally transmitted |
| Hyeseongga [Comet Song] | 6th century | Jinpyeong (circa 600) | Yungcheonsa |
| Pungyo [Wind Song/ Folk Song] | 7th century | Queen Seondeok (632-646) | Yangji, orally transmitted, work song |
| Wonwangsaengga [Song for Rebirth in Paradise] | 7th century | Munmu (661-680) | Gwangdeok or his wife, orally transmitted |
| Jukjirangga [Song of Jukjirang] (also known as Mojukjirangga) | 7th century | Hyoso (692-701) | Deugo |
| Heonhwaga [Song of Flower Offering] | 8th century | Seongdeok (702-736) | Anonymous elderly |
| Wonga (737) | 8th century | Hyoseong (737-741) | Sinchung |
| Dosolga [Dosol Song] (760) | 8th century | Gyeongdeok (742-765) | Wolmyeongsa |
| Jemangmaega [Song for the Sister] | 8th century | Gyeongdeok (742-765) | Wolmyeongsa |
| Anminga [Song for People ] (765) | 8th century | Gyeongdeok (742-765) | Chungdamsa |
| Giparangga [Song of Giparang ] (also known as Changiparangga) | 8th century | Gyeongdeok (742-765) | Chungdamsa |
| Cheonsudaebiga [Song ofThousand-hand Bodhisattva (also known as Docheonsudaebiga) | 8th century | Gyeongdeok (742-765) | Huimyeong's five year- old son or his wife |
| Ujeokga [Bandit Song] | 8th century | Gyeongdeok (742-765) | Yeongjae |
| Cheoyongga [Song of Cheoyong] (879) | 9th century | Heongang (875-886) | Cheoyong |
| Boyeon sibwonga [Song on theTen Wishes of Buddhist Sages] | 10th century | sixth year of Silla Sindeok's reign to twenty-fourth year of Goryeo Gwangjong's reign (917-973) | Gyunyeo daesa |





Below, let us take a look at the background of "Cheoyongga" and discuss details of its content.

One day when King Heongang, the forty-ninth ruler of Silla, went to the seashore near Ulju-gun on the East Coast, the weather suddenly turned bad by the caprice of the Dragon King, with the sky becoming overcast with clouds and heavy fog descending. As darkness fell, the king and his retinue got lost. When the king, advised by his Astronomy Officer, agreed to build a temple for the Dragon King, the weather at last cleared up, and light returned. Soon the Dragon King himself appeared, accompanied by his seven sons, and started to dance and praise the virtues of the king. Before returning to his underwater palace, the Dragon King left behind one of his sons, Cheoyong, to help the king with the kingdom. The king arranged for Cheoyong to stay in the royal capital, offering him a court title and a beautiful wife.

One day, Cheoyong stayed out until late into the night, enjoying the bright moon of Seorabeol. When he returned home that night, Cheoyong saw someone who coveted his wife sleeping next to her in his bed. Instead of challenging the intruder, Cheoyong took a step back and started dancing while singing the following poem: "Under the bright moon of Seorabeol/ I reveled late into the night./ When I came home and returned to my bed/ I found not two but four legs./ Two are mine but whose is the other pair?/ They used to be mine but what can I say/ Now that I have been robbed?" His song and dance vanquished and dispelled his wife's ravisher. From the content, it is evident that "Cheoyongga" is a shamanistic song of a sort. The lyrics which might be construed as lewd at the surface level has a subtext in which his wife's ravisher is in fact a yeoksin or god of sickness, and their intercourse means that his wife has taken ill. Sung to cure his wife, this song may therefore be considered a shamanistic healing song. Even if one doesn't consider this song a shamanistic song, the last phrase of the song suggests that Cheoyong is above the romantic or carnal disappointment.

Since then, yeoksin are said to run away at the encounter with Cheoyong who was, as a result, widely regarded as the exorcist figure for yeoksin. This eight-verse hyangga that Cheoyong sang became known as "Cheoyongga" and his dance Cheoyongmu. "Cheoyongga" and Cheoyongmu were sung and danced through to the Goryeo, then passed to the Joseon period, with many dance masks and paintings representing Cheoyong surviving to the present. Meanwhile, the name Cheoyong is likely to have been originally written with the character 龍 (*/yong /* 'dragon') to mean the "dragon who

stayed in the human world" before this character was replaced by (容/*yong*/ 'face'), since he was nevertheless a man, even if the son of the Dragon King.

### Legends and Folk Tales

The legends of Silla together punctuate the long journey of dreams its people dreamt over its one thousand years of history. Legends often indirectly relate historical facts that official history does not. In that sense, we may say that legends are more truthful than official history. We find in legends the stories of an epoch that are far richer and deeper in human experience than the accounts of history's victors and losers. The world of myths, legends, and folk tales is like the inner flesh of history. If history is the quantitative sum of the past, legends are its invisible depth. Moreover, legends and tales sometimes depict spheres beyond this world. Among the tales recorded in *Samguk yusa* and other historical records, those most distinctively and recognizably associated with Silla are related to the following four facts.

First, Silla had three female rulers, whereas in neighboring Baekje or Goguryeo, no woman ever ascended the throne. So it is not surprising that many legends from Silla are about its female sovereigns. Second, Silla people revered a goblin named Duduri who was the guardian deity of the blacksmiths. Early Silla rulers, or more specifically the kings of Saro-guk such as Geoseogan Park Hyeokgeose, Isageum Seok Talhae, and Kim Alji, were all heroes of iron culture. Third, foreign religions became assimilated in Silla through clashes with native faiths. Many Silla legends offer glimpses into how Buddhism was initially met with resistance and eventually gained acceptance. Fourth, Silla was a society where common folk and peasants were respected and played a visible role. Tales like "Jigwi Who Was Infatuated with the Queen" or "Queen Jinseong and Geotaji" told in *Samguk yusa* depict people at the bottom rung of Silla society as self-respecting individuals leading a fulfilling existence.

The "Three Foresights of Queen Seondeok" is a story that recounts three events about which Queen Seondeok had preternatural foreknowledge, thereby describing the uncanny abilities of the queen as both a leader and a person.

The first event is about the odorless peony flowers. One day Emperor Taizu of Tang China sent to Silla a painting of peony flowers in red, burgundy, and white, along with peony plant seeds. Upon seeing this painting, the queen predicted that this flower would have no fragrance.





The next spring when the seeds were planted, and the flowers blossomed, indeed they had no scent just as the queen had predicted. The queen knew that the peony had no fragrance from the absence of butterflies in the painting and saw through Emperor Taizu's satirical intention of likening the unmarried female monarch to a fragrance-less flower. This story vividly translates the tension and covert hostility that existed between the queen and the Chinese ruler.

The second event is the foreknowledge possessed by Queen Seondeok regarding a secret infiltration of the kingdom by enemy troops. In a temple named Yeongmyosa, a large chorus of frogs croaking was heard from the pond-Ongmunji Pond-despite it being the middle of winter. This strange incident was reported to the queen who then dispatched elite troops to Yeogeungok Valley <Fig 132> and quashed the enemy lurking there. When the troops, initially incredulous, arrived in Seogyeo, they saw that there was indeed a place called Yeogeungok to which the queen had directed them. And there, they found five hundred Baekje troops hiding. If the

Fig 132 Yeogeungok Valley, Gyeongju

Fig 133 Sacheonwangsa Temple site and the Tomb of Queen Seondeok

peony story is about Queen Seondeok's capacity for keen observation, this story demonstrates her perceptiveness and decision-making ability. Queen Seondeok is said to have been well versed in both Silla's native faiths as well as the yin/yang and Five Elements theory. The queen understood that Baekje troops were lying in ambush west of the temple, as the angry frogs resembled soldiers, the name of the pond *Ongmun* [Jade Gate] was a symbol for women, therefore a yin sign, and the color white meant the west.





The third event foretold by the queen was her own demise. The queen predicted the date of her death and instructed her retainers to bury her in Doricheon. When her retainers asked her where Doricheon was, she simply answered that it was on the south side of Nangsan Mountain. The queen indeed passed away on the date she had predicted and was buried on the south side of Nangsan. Ten years later, during King Munmu's reign, Sacheonwangsa Temple was constructed on a lot below the slope where her tomb was located. Buddhist scriptures say that Doricheon (Trayastramsa in Sanskrit) is above Sacheonwang or the Four Heavenly Kings. People, therefore, finally understood how her prediction was borne out <Fig 133>; Queen Seondeok had been extremely familiar with Buddhist scriptures. The first female ruler of Silla, Queen Seondeok appears to have had broad and deep knowledge of various religions.

Tales about the monk Uisang and Buseoksa Temple are recorded throughout *Samguk yusa* and *Song gaosengzhuan* [Song-dynasty Biographies of Eminent Monks]. When Uisang was in Tang China, studying Buddhism, he stayed at a boarding house whose owner had a daughter named Seonmyo. The maiden fell in love with Uisang who was impervious to her advances. Realizing that there was no way for her to win his heart or distract him from his devotional fervor, Seonmyo decided to commit herself to Buddhism and content herself with witnessing his spiritual quest from a distance as a Buddhist disciple. When the day for Uisang to head back to Silla came, Seonmyo became a dragon to ensure the safety of the seafaring monk.

Seonmyo's unrequited love for Uisang was thus sublimated into a selfless devotion, and she followed him to Silla as a guardian dragon. After his return, when Uisang set out to building Buseoksa Temple, he faced resistance from followers of native religions. Song gaosengzhuan reports that Uisang was confronted by some five hundred of them. Seeing the resistance, Seonmyo transformed herself into a buseok, or a moving boulder, and tumbled down toward the protestors and chased them away. This is how the temple acquired the name Buseoksa.

### Sino-Korean Literature

The Jinhan region in Yeongnam came into contact with Chinese characters toward the late Wiman Joseon period through educated people who emigrated south from areas north of the Korean peninsula as well as Chinese refugees. This phenomenon intensified after the four Han Commanderies

were established. After the conquest of the Hangang river valley during King Jinheung's reign, the knowledge of *hanja*, or Sino-Korean characters, in Silla caught up with the level in Goguryeo and Baekje, as the increased literacy made possible direct exchanges with China. In fact, hanja records from Silla dating from prior to the sixth century were hardly grammatical. For example, epigraphs found on steles from the early and mid-sixth century simply transcribed phonetically Korean names of places, people, and government offices in Chinese characters, which were then placed in a certain order. Sino-Korean literature from eras before the unification of the Three Kingdoms was mostly made up of practical documents, drafted often by educated Buddhist monks, such as official reports to the king, diplomatic documents sent to China, and historical texts centered on the royal family. Poetry had no real place yet in literature of this period.

Fig 134 Epigraph on the back of the Amitabha Buddha statue of Gamsansa Temple, Gyeongju

Around the time of the unification, Confucianism and Buddhism were established in Silla as new systems of ruling ideology. The Nine Confucian Classics of the Tang Dynasty were also brought to Silla at this time, and consequently, the understanding of Confucianism widened as well as deepened. *Wen xuan* [Selection of Literature] was selected as a textbook at Gukhak, and *Wen guan ci lin*, the Chinese literary anthology, was also studied there, effectively raising the level of reading and writing proficiency in hanja.

After the unification of the Three Kingdoms, writing in Chinese characters was no longer confined to Buddhist monks. A new intelligentsia made up of people who were exposed to the Five or Nine Classics at the Tang Dynasty's Imperial College or Gukhak in Silla emerged, along with other virtuosos in writing who studied





*Wen xuan* or *Wen guan ci lin*. These people soon replaced Buddhist monks as writers drafting diplomatic documents and other important government documents. Some renowned examples are: Kang Su, famously remembered as a sagacious writer of diplomatic documents; Kim In-mun, a scholar who traveled to China seven times; and Seol Chong, who taught the Nine Classics to young scholars and composed Pungwangseo (fables containing advice to the king, also known as Hwanggye).

Meanwhile, Kim △△, the Sogyeong of Gukhak, composed the epigraph of the King Munmu's grave stele (681), and Kim Pi-o wrote the epigraph on the Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok (771). Epigraphs chronicling the circumstances behind the creation of Maitreya and Amitabha Buddha of Gamsansa <Fig 134> and of the Sacred Bell of King Seondeok <Fig 135> are particularly flattering prose from this period.

The chronicles of the two Buddha statues of Gamsansa relate how Kim Ji-seong built Gamsansa Temple to pray for the peace of souls of his deceased parents, dedicating the Maitreya statue (719) to his late mother and the Amitabha statue (720) to his late father. The inscriptions are found on the backside of the mandorla of the two statues. The texts are said to have been authored by a certain Nama Chong, a name generally believed to designate Seol Chong who was an eminent scholar and renowned, accomplished writer. Both of the texts are made up of three paragraphs. The first, in the guise of a preamble, discusses the essence of utmost *do* (*dao/tao* in Chinese), the second recounts the life of Kim Ji-seong, and the third his purposes in creating the statues. The concepts enlisted in these texts are

Fig 135 Line drawing of epigraph and Apsaras of the Sacred Bell of King Seondeok, Gyeongju

drawn not just from Buddhism, but from Laozi, Zhuangzi, and many other *Confucian thinkers. Abstract ideas like jido (zhi dao; "utmost way"), trikaya, jinjong (Buddha's teachings), and yeongban (high government title)* are freely and seamlessly integrated into the writing. Moreover, the first and last sentences are drafted so that they form a symmetry for a more stylistically polished composition.

The Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok, also known as the Bell of Bongdeoksa or Emille Bell, was cast as an homage to the life and work of King Seongdeok. The bell was planned during the reign of his son and successor King Gyeongdeok (r. 742-764) and completed in the seventh year of King Hyegong's reign (771). The epigraph engraved on the surface of this bell consists of a preface comprising about six hundred-thirty characters and the main text comprising two hundred characters. The preface is a typical style of saryukbyeonnyeomun, meaning that four-character phrases are alternated with six-character phrases, with the first and last phrases matching exactly. The main inscription is in poetic form containing fifty verses, each consisting of four words. The verses are written according to the so-called changing rhyme rule, the rhyme changing several times over the course of the poem. The writing is fluid and natural, with no awkward choice of words or turn of phrase. The vocabulary used is sophisticated, similar to the kind encountered in scriptures or famous texts. Ancient stories and expressions are drawn from vast-ranging sources, and comparisons are cogent and compelling, exhibiting an impressive writer's craft by any measure.

As for poems, the body of Sino-Korean literature consisted mainly of Buddhist hymns composed by monks and some lyrical poems from the Unified Silla period. Scholars and officials were only occasional participants in poetic endeavors. Even poems by monks are mostly those written by the likes of Hyecho and Uisang while in China, not in Silla.

During the later period, however, scholars with an understanding of literary trends in China and capable of creative writing returned to Silla en masse, spreading regulated poetry genres and greatly contributing to improvement in writing styles and literary production in Silla. Choe Chi-won was the most notable of them. Few writers of his time were as prolific or as versatile in style as he, and few could compare to him in terms of the elegance and sophistication of his writing. This stock of experiences in creative writing later served as the foundation for the blossoming of aristocratic literature in early Goryeo.





# 6 Music

In ancient societies, because of the importance of rituals, music mattered far more in people's lives than today. Silla was a hierarchical society-with royals, aristocrats, Buddhist clergy, and common folk as its four main classes—so it is reasonable to assume that the types of music and dance enjoyed or practiced were different depending on the social class. Commoners probably sang and danced the kind of songs and dances that were directly related to their everyday life. Meanwhile, music and dances for royals and aristocrats were likely to have been more refined in a manner to fit their elevated social status.

### Music of the Common Folk

Music for the common folk had an inseparable relationship with work. While some labor, whether farming or fishing, could be performed alone, most types required collective effort. For group labor, work songs were an essential instrument for pacing the activity and creating more effective teamwork. Silla people of the fourth to fifth centuries who constructed gigantic burial mounds probably sang work songs while carrying heavy loads of dirt to rally their spirits. Likewise, Silla people of the seventh to tenth centuries who built stone pagodas must have also sung work songs while transporting weighty stone blocks, to synchronize their collective efforts for greater efficiency.

In *Samguk yusa*, we read that when the sculptor Yangji was carving the Jangyuksang—a statue measuring one *jang* (one *jang being eight cheok*) and six cheok (one *cheok* being 30.3 cm)—at Yeongmyosa Temple during the reign of Queen Seondeok (r. 632-647), men and women who transported muddy soil sang a song called *Pungyo* (literally 'Wind Song'). Although we have no way of knowing what the melody of this song was, some of its lyrics are quoted in *Samguk yusa*: "*Ora, ora, ora/ Ora. Seoreopdeora/ Seoreopda. Uri-deul-iyeo!/ Gongdeok-eul dakkeureo ora!* [Come! Come! Come!/ Come. How sorrowful!/ Sorrowful we are!/ Come and do the good deeds!]. Judging from the lyrics, the song must have had a simple melody and rhythm, much like folk songs from later eras.

Moreover, people often expressed what they did not dare say for whatever reason through children's songs. A fine case in point is *Seodongyo*. Seodong, who later became King Mu of Baekje, was the son of an impoverished widow who earned his living by selling Indian hemp plants. One day, the young man who heard about the beauty of the third daughter of Silla king Jinpyeong (r. 579-632) came to Geumseong, Silla's capital city, and had children sing a song he composed. This song, known as *Seodongyo*, tells the following story: "Princess Seonhwa is secretly wed and goes around hugging Seodong when the night falls."

The very short lyrics clearly insinuate that Princess Seonhwa was having a tryst with Seodong. By spreading the false rumor through this song, Seodong managed to earn the hand of the princess, as the king preferred it to the wanton reputation for his daughter. Although scholarly opinion is divided over the question of its authorship, most agree at least that the time period during which this song was popular was between the fifth and the seventh centuries.

### Buddhist Music and Musical Production by Monks

Buddhism was transmitted to Silla during the fifth century and was recognized as the official religion in the early sixth century. The arrival of Buddhism brought about important changes in Silla, taking it to a new stage of social development. Music was no exception to this rule, as advancements in the field of music were led chiefly by Buddhist monks.

During King Gyeongmun's reign, four Hwarang (Silla's elite youth) wrote three songs on the occasion of their tour of the Tongcheon area of Gangwon-do, which expressed hope for the prosperous and wise reign.





The lyrics were then sent to the monk Daegu hwasang, who was called upon to compose the music for them. The three songs so completed are *Hyeongeumpogok, Daedogok, and Mungungok*.

"Hyeongeumpo" in the title *Hyeongeumpogok* literally means hugging the hyeongeum, or the string instrument geomungo. As such, this song is likely to be related to the geomungo. "Daedo" in the title "Daedogok" means "great way" and may be related to Sadaedoje [Four Great Way Rituals], a ritual observed in Silla. If this relation holds true, "Daedogok" would have been ritualistic music. Nothing is known of "Mungungok." Of the three songs, neither musical scores nor lyrics have survived. However, King Gyeongmun is recorded to have been pleased by them when they were performed before him. We therefore know at least that Daegu hwasang's musical compositions were fine enough to impress a king. This anecdote also suggests that major musicians in Silla of the ninth century were mostly Buddhist monks.

### Music of Kings and Aristocrats

Kings Heondeok and Heongang, two ninth-century Silla rulers, personally played the geum during banquets thrown for their courtiers. The geum, a string instrument, is not an easy instrument to play, unless by a highly trained performer. That they played a musical instrument requiring a high level of skills is something that sets Silla kings apart from the rulers of Goryeo or Joseon, for example. The word *geum*(琴) appears to have been replaced the older term *go* designating a string instrument. As indicated by the examples of geomungo and gayatgo, *go* was the common noun for a string instrument, and *geum*(琴)" is likely to be the hanja transcription of *go*. Hence, the geum played by Silla kings could be either the gayageum, brought from Gaya during the sixth century, or the sillageum (siragi goto in Japanese), Silla's native string instrument. A sillageum was taken to Japan in the early ninth century and has survived in the collection of Shosoin.

The appearance of Silla's traditional string instrument is known through the tou or clay figurines dating from the fifth century. Of the twelve figurines adorning a long-necked jar discovered in Gyerim-ro tomb No. 30 <Fig 136>, one is a person playing the go or geum <Fig 137>. The instrument resting on the musician's lap is placed so that he faces it at its mid-point and in a slanted position. With the gayageum, on the other hand, the musician sits at one end of the instrument. Therefore, this instrument performed by the

Fig 136 Long-necked jar decorated with figurines from Burial No. 30, Gyerim-ro, Gyeongju

Fig 137 The go(instrument) depiction on the long-necked jar decorated with figurines

clay figurine might very well be a native string instrument of Silla predating the arrival of the gayageum. After the gayageum, the geomungo was also introduced from Goguryeo in the early Unified Silla period.

Kings were of course not the only ones who performed music during court banquets in Silla; professional musicians and dancers performed for the king and his guests. In a banquet hosted by King Sinmun when he was visiting Sinchon in 689, seven pieces of music are said to have been





performed, including *Hasinyeolmu* and *Sanaemu*. These titles ending with *mu* [dance] suggest that they were all dance music. The performance of each of the songs involved three to six people, not including the musical director, who were singers, dancers or instrumentalists. The relatively small number of performers can be explained by the fact that the banquet was not held in the royal palace or in the capital city, but at a venue in Sinchon.

In February 807 (eighth year of Aejang's reign), when King Aejang was attending a musical performance in Sungnyejeon Hall in Wolseong, *Sanaegeum* is said to have been performed first, followed by the performance of "Daegeummu." The number of musicians who performed "Sanaegeum" on this occasion was about twice that of musicians enlisted in Sinchon. Meanwhile, there doesn't seem to have been a special venue for musical performances in the royal palace, as most banquets are said to have been held at Sungnyejeon or Imhaejeon, both of which were buildings used for general receptions.

*Daegeummu* is believed to have derived from *Daeak (or Bangaak)* by Baekgyeol, the greatest Silla musician of the fifth century, who lived during the reign of Maripgan Jabi. Baekgyeol, literally meaning "resewn or patched one hundred times," was a nickname the musician earned for the tattered clothes he wore, as he was unable to afford new clothes. One day shortly before New Year's Day, his wife was crestfallen about having no grain with which to prepare the holiday meals. Upon seeing this, Baekgyeol set out to play his geomungo, producing the sound of a mortar and a pestle, as though grains were being crushed in his house. This tune was later transmitted under the name "Daeak."

### *Akbon*, the Fundamentals of Music

*Akbon* [Fundamentals of Music] was written by Kim Dae-mun who was the Magistrate of Hansanju (appointed in 704; third year of King Seongdeok's reign). Kim Dae-mun authored a number of other books aside from Akbon, including *Hwarangsegi* [The Age of the Hwarang]. Assuming from what is written in the contents of *Yueji* [Book of Music] in Liji, which is believed to have been transmitted to Silla by Kim's time, *Akbon* is presumed to be a book offering a definition of music and explaining different types of sounds and tones, along with the description of the various musical instruments, their origins, and different akjo used for each instrument.

Different akjo or pitches were used for different instruments in Silla. According to the "Monographs" section of *Samguk sagi*, the geomungo,

*hyangbipa* (a pear-shaped lute), and *samjuk* (three flutes of three different sizes) all used distinct pitches. The pitches varied particularly widely among string instruments. While the pitch for wind instruments was set during their fabrication, string instruments could be tuned to the desired pitch, making it easy for the musician to use the mode of his choice. Variable pitches are not something used today, as it makes group performances impossible. One can therefore infer from the use of variable pitches for string instruments that solos were the preferred form of musical performance in Silla.

**Musical Instruments of Silla**

The types of musical instruments used in Silla are known to us both through archaeological and written records. The archaeological evidence can be the instruments themselves or the images of them engraved on other objects.

Written records mention three string instruments, the geomungo, gayatgo, and the hyangbipa. However, a fourth type, the sillageum, is known to us through the example surviving, along with its case, in Shosoin in Japan. Finally, there is the *gonghu*, a harp-like instrument, whose existence is known through the sculpture on the surface of a bell.

The geomungo and gayageum are still widely played today and regarded as major string instruments of Korea. The geomungo originated in Goguryeo and was transmitted to Silla shortly after the unification of the Three Kingdoms. It is said to have been stored in Cheonjongo, the special storehouse for Manpasikjeok, the magical flute, and treated as a national treasure. Ok Bo-go, who lived in King Gyeongdeok's time (742-765), was a famed performer of the geomungo. He is said o have played the geomungo at Geumsongjeong in Geumosan in Gyeongju and stayed in Unsangwon in Mt. Jirisan for fifty years to practice and study the instrument. There, he composed thirty tunes for the same instrument.

The gayageum was transmitted from Daegaya when the musician Ureuk and his student, Imun, came to Silla and pledged allegiance to the Silla king. This twelve-string instrument was invented by Ureuk by the order of King Gasil of Daegaya, modeling it on a similar Chinese instrument. However, in the absence of a surviving example, we are unable to guess the design of the instrument at the time of its original creation.

A sillageum has survived in Shosoin in Japan, housed in its north storage building <Fig 138>. This sillageum measures 158 cm long and 30 cm wide, a size roughly the same as today's gayageum or geomungo.





Fig 138 Sillageum instrument in Shosoin, Japan


Fig 139 Bipa (lutes) depicted on various artifacts

The bipa is a hand-held string instrument similar to today's guitar. In Silla, a variety of bipa existed. The bipa represented on the surface of the sarira casket of Gameunsa <Fig 139-①>, for instance, has a bird head-like decoration at the head of the instrument. Meanwhile, the one sculpted on the temple bell of Sangwonsa <Fig 139-②> has four strings and a set of tuning pegs, with a straight neck. On the other hand, the bipa engraved on the surface of the Stupa of Jijeung daesa in Bongamsa <Fig 139-③> and the one in the stone sculpture representing a heavenly musician <Fig 139-④> are bent into an L-shape near the tuning pegs. The bipa is either played with the fingers or with a paddle shaped like a wide, flat spoon.

In China, it is believed that the the bipa was originally brought from the Western world. In Silla, however, a bipa was already represented in clay figurines dating from the fourth to the fifth centuries. The Silla bipa, therefore, appears distinct from the Chinese bipa <Fig 139-⑤>. The bipa in its primitive form was a simple instrument with only two strings. Later, after the unification of the three kingdoms, the number of strings was increased to four under the influence of the Goguryeo and Baekje bipa. Their variety also widened, with some having a straight neck, some others a bent neck.

The gonghu is a string instrument resembling the harp, represented, for example, on the surface sculpture of the bell of Sangwonsa Temple gonghu (725) <Fig 140>. The gonghu is believed to be an instrument of Western origin.

Fig 140 Rubbing of gonghu on the bell of Sangwonsa Temple, Pyeongchang

Fig 141 Rubbing of a *saeng* on the bell of Sangwonsa Temple, Pyeongchang





Sculptures of musicians performing this instrument are encountered on stone pagodas and stupas. This instrument first appeared in the early Unified Silla period and was no longer played after the early Goryeo period. The *daegeum, junggeum, and the sogeum*, known as *samjuk* (the "three flutes"), are the most representative examples of Silla wind instruments. The daegeum is the largest, the junggeum the medium-sized, and the sogeum the smallest of them. Aside from these three flutes, wind instruments identified through the archaeological record include the *saeng, so, jongjeok, danso, nabal, and the hun*.

The *saeng*, today known as the *saenghwang*, is a wind instrument made up of a large number of sound pipes that are each attached with a long reed. This instrument is featured at the mid- and low levels of the Sangwonsa Temple bell <Fig 141> and is also seen on roof-end tiles. The saeng was performed through to the Goryeo and Joseon Dynasties and is stilled played today.

The jongjeok is a wind instrument held vertically. This instrument, never mentioned written records, could be the same instrument as the one referred to as the *ga* (笳). Among jongjeok-type wind instruments appearing in fifth-century Silla clay figurines and concave roof-end tiles of the seventh-eighth centuries are the short piri flutes with a narrow sound pipe. Danso-type flutes that are slightly larger and longer are also found among them. A piri is also seen on the stupa of Jijeung daesa of Bongamsa <Fig 143>.

The hun is a vessel-type wind instrument similar to the ocarina. The spherically shaped instrument made of clay has a mouthpiece and several finger holes. A hun measuring 3.7 cm in diameter with an appearance reminiscent of a monkey's face has been discovered in the Wolseong moat in Gyeongju <Fig 142>. This instrument of foreign origin is evidence that

Fig 142 Hun excavated from the moat of Wolseong, Gyeongju

Fig 143 *Piri* (flute) depiction on the stupa of master Jijeung at Bongamsa Temple, Mungyeong

Fig 144 *Bakpan* (instrument) depicted on the stupa of master Jijeung at Bongamsa Temple, Mungyeong

Fig 145 *Yogo* (instrument) depicted on the sarira container of the west pagoda of Gameunsa Temple, Gyeongju

Tang Dynasty musical instruments were imported to the Korean peninsula already during the Silla period.

The only two percussion instruments mentioned in *Samguk sagi* are the bakpan and daego. However, instruments like *beomjong* (temple bells) and *geumgo* (gongs) not appearing in written records have survived from this period. Moreover, a drum dating from the eighth century was discovered in Hwawang Mountain Fortress in Changnyeong, and a yogo (an hourglass-shaped drum), also dating from the eighth century, was recovered in Iseong Mountain Fortress in Gyeonggi-do. Other percussion instruments such as the bara and yobal, both cymbal-like instruments, are known to us through sculptural representations.

The *bakpan*, today referred to as the bak, is an instrument struck to signal the beginning and the end of a musical performance. The most realistic depiction of a performer striking a bak is the bas-relief sculpture on the stupa of Jijeung daesa in Bongamsa <Fig 144>.

Unlike temple bells and gongs, which are metal instruments, hardly any drums have survived from this period due to the perishable materials of which they were made, namely cowhide over a wooden frame. Yogo and small-sized drums were the only ones that have been thus far recovered at archaeological sites. A *daego*, which literally means a "large drum," is recorded in *Samguk sagi* to have been hung at the drum tower in Wolseong in the second year of King Taejong Muyeol's reign (655). However, no examples of a daego have survived.

The yogo is an hourglass-shaped drum that is tied to the body of the performer at the waist level. The figurine on the sarira casket found inside





Fig 146 *Yogo* (instrument) excavated from the Iseongsanseong Fortress, Hanam

Fig 147 Drum excavated from the lotus pond feature at the Hwawangsanseong Fortress, Changnyeong

Fig 148 *Bara* (instrument) depicted on the sarira container of the west pagoda of Gameunsa Temple, Gyeongju

the western pagoda of Gameunsa (682) represents a musician striking a *yogo* <Fig 145>. Meanwhile, an actual yogo was discovered in Iseong Mountain Fortress in Hanam, Gyeonggi-do <Fig 146>, although the drum is missing much of the frame on one side. This wooden yogo is 43.0 cm on the longest side and 17.0 cm in diameter. Similar to today's janggo in the overall shape, the yogo is, however, smaller in size.

An example of a small drum is the elm-wood drum, excavated at the pond site of Hwawang Mountain Fortress <Fig 147>, which measures 51.2 cm in height. A hook is present on the front and back for hanging the drum.

The bara or yobal is a percussion instrument resembling the cymbal. The oldest representation of a bara is seen on the sarira casket discovered inside the western pagoda in Gameunsa <Fig 148>. No actual instrument has survived from the Unified Silla period, unfortunately. During the Goryeo Dynasty, *bara* of more varied sizes were used, with many of them surviving to the present. The bara is used today for performances of *daechwita*, the traditional military music, and for bara dance.

7

# Science and Technology

## Astronomy and Calendars

Anyone with at least an inkling of astronomy in Silla is aware of the two astronomical marvels of this ancient kingdom: Cheomseongdae, the star-gazing tower on the northwest side of the royal palace complex in Wolseong, and some thirty solar eclipses recorded in the "Record of Silla" section of *Samguk sagi*.

### Astronomy

Cheomseongdae is widely believed to be a star-gazing tower, as its name suggests. The stone brick tower with a square frame at the top gradually flares wide to the bottom that has a circular plan (2.85 m in top diameter, 4.93 m in bottom diameter and 9.10 m in height), a design that well translates the cosmology of the Silla people and the way they conceived the heavens above.

Silla saw itself as the Land of Buddha, and the number of stone brick tiers constituting this tower is not an insignificant detail. Adding the heavens above and the earth below it to thirty-one, the number of tiers of bricks, yields the number thirty-three, which symbolizes *Doricheon* or *Trayastrimsa*, the Buddhist heavens belonging to the thirty-three devas in





Sumeru Mountain. Another theory is that this edifice mirrors Silla people's worship of the heavens, with this tower marking what they considered to be the center of the universe.

Of all theories surrounding this mystery edifice, however, the simplest, which sees Cheomseongdae as an astronomical observatory just as its name states, is currently the most widely accepted one. The proponents of this theory, unfazed by the small size of the top opening of the tower, imagine that people indeed gazed at the stars from there, using astronomical instruments brought up through this opening. However, we find no record about astronomical observations conducted at Cheomseongdae in *Samguk sagi*, *Samguk yusa*, or the many epigraphs from the Silla period. As a matter of fact, no astronomical instruments or related artifacts have ever been

Fig 149 View of Cheomseongdae, Gyeongju

discovered, either. In recent years, Cheomseongdae has increasingly been viewed as a symbolic or ritualistic edifice rather than a structure serving a practical purpose, including astronomical observations. According to *Samguk yusa*, Cheomseongdae was constructed during the reign of Queen Seondeok (r. 632-647). Later, more concrete dates were proposed during the Joseon period; 633 in the Geographical Appendix to *Sejong sillok* [Annals of King Sejong] and 647 in Jeungbomunheonbigo. However, these dates are only estimates based on the year of Queen Seondeok's coronation or that of her death. The spike in interest in astronomy in late Goryeo to early Joseon probably explains these attempts at more precisely dating Cheomseongdae.

Regarding the records of solar eclipses, of sixty-seven total such incidents recorded in *Samguk sagi*, thirty concern Ancient Silla and Unified Silla. Moreover, nineteen of the thirty solar eclipses reported are said to have occurred between April 1 of the fourth year after the founding of Silla, or the fourth year of King Hyeokgeose's rule (54 BC), and October 1 of the tenth year of the twelfth ruler Cheomhae (256 AD). In other words, over 60 % of them occurred in early Silla, during the Saro-guk period. Moreover, nine solar eclipses were registered during the reigns of the first two rulers, over a seventy-year period. Interestingly, no solar eclipse was reported for the five hundred and thirty-year period thereafter until August 1, 787 (third year of the twenty-eighth ruler Wonseong's reign). Eleven solar eclipses were reported during the Unified Silla period, and all of them occurred during the last one hundred fifty-five years of Silla's existence during a time of increasing political and social unrest, as the kingdom's fortune gradually began wane a century after the unification of the Korean peninsula.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that, while 30 % of all solar eclipses occurred during the seventy-year period between the reigns of the first and second rulers of Silla, and 63 % in the first three hundred ten years of Silla's history, not a single one was recorded for the ensuing five hundred thirty years (257-787). This five hundred and thirty-year period between the Middle Ancient and the Middle Periods is also a period during which the astronomy and calendar system of the Tang Dynasty must have been introduced, causing significant progress in this field. One possibility is that these records from *Samguk sagi*, rather than being of events that actually occurred in Silla, were Chinese solar eclipse records of the Later Han period, quoted from histocial records such as *Han Shu* [Book of Han], *Hou Han Shu* [Book of Later Han], *Wei Shu* [Book of Wei], or *Jin Shu* [Book of Jin].





The most important question, however, is how the solar eclipses were observed and recorded during the Three Kingdoms period and how these records found their way into *Samguk sagi*. One of the most common mistakes regarding this subject is that people tend to assume that the observation of a solar eclipse is an overly complicated task. In reality, however, it is a simple act that is passive, intuitive, and empirical in nature. What is complicated, on the other hand, is predicting a solar eclipse, something that pertains to exact science, requiring a certain degree of observing capability and an advanced calendar system. Even for a simpler act such as recording the date of an observed solar eclipse, one needs a calendar system. Likewise, when observing the constellations, the difficulty is not so much in observing the stars, but rather in transmitting what was observed to later generations, which cannot be achieved without some sort of a system of celestial maps.

### Calendars

In order to understand the state of astronomical knowledge in Silla, it is essential to first understand the date and calendar systems. Let us see how time was kept in this period when the calendar system was still at a primitive stage.

To see whether an organized calendar existed or utilized in Silla, we must check if intercalation was in use at that time. A leap month was first recorded in 689 (ninth year of King Sinmun's reign), shortly after the unification of the Three Kingdoms. This corroborates the record from fifteen years earlier that Daenama Deokbok, who learned about the Chinese calendar system, returned to Silla in the first month of the fourteenth year of Munmu's reign (674). The Chinese calendar system referenced here was Linde li, an early Tang Dynasty calendar, and it is this calendar that permitted the use of the leap month during King Sinmun's reign. Moreover, an entry dating from three years after the time when a leap month was first recorded in Silla, in August of the first year of King Hyoso's reign (692), states, "The eminent monk Dojeung returned from Tang China and presented to the king the celestial map he brought from there." Hence, it was around this time that a calendar was put into use for the first time, along with basic tools for astronomical understanding to lead to concrete progress in this field.

A specialized agency in charge of astronomy and calendars was yet to be established, however. One such agency, *Nugakjeon*, was established for the

first time in the early eighth century, or more precisely in the seventeenth year of King Seongdeok's reign (718). Nugakjeon was staffed with a doctor of astronomy and six others known as the doctors of Nugak who were responsible for managing the water clock. Nugakjeon, therefore, appeared to have been an agency for keeping time more than for astronomical observation or compiling calendars.

In addition to these written sources, there are epigraphs containing some relevant information. The only epigraph with a sexagenary date containing a leap month is the tablet of the Mugujeongtap Pagoda of Changnimsa (855) erected in the mid-ninth century during the reign of the forty-sixth ruler Munseong. The calendar used in this epigraph is the Xuanming calendar of the Tang Dynasty. In other words, the *Xuanming* calendar was utilized in late Silla, which explains the increased occurrence of records with a leap month date in *Samguk sagi*, following the establishment of Nugakjeon during King Seongdeok's reign.

Thus, there was no natively developed calendar in Silla. What we know is that the calendar *Linde li* was adopted in King Munmu's time and that Nugakjeon was later established during King Seongdeok's rule to oversee astronomy and calendar-related affairs. In late Silla, *Xuanming*, *Linde li*, yet another Tang Dynasty calendar, was adopted in Silla. The next question then is at what point in time, prior to the Unified Silla period, a calendar was first used in Silla. In order to answer this question, we need to look at the broad practice of time keeping in Silla. For example, the worship services held at tombs or shrines of royal family ancestors took place usually in February of the year after a new king was crowned. The fact that these rituals were held often in February rather than in January may indicate that February was the first month of the year for the people of Silla.

Another interesting fact is that if articles on solar eclipses and other natural disasters or anomalies are excluded, only two articles in the "Record of Silla" in *Samguk sagi* have a complete date consisting of a year, month, and day, over the entire six hundred-year period from the founding of Silla to King Beopheung's reign (514-540). These two entries record something of an extraordinary event as well, since they relate to the death of King Cheomhae and King Jijeung. If these two entries are also excluded, the only and the oldest entry that is precisely dated is the one recording the hosting of Palgwanyeonhoe in a temple described as the outer temple on October 22 of 572 (thirty-third year of King Jinheung's reign). The only plausible





explanation as to why solar eclipses and natural disasters are precisely dated with sexagenary dates in early records of *Samguk sagi* when no other events are dated in the same manner is that the author of this book consulted Chinese records to determine the exact dates of these events.

Dated events appearing in epigraphs are from an earlier period than those recorded in *Samguk sagi*. For example, the date engraved on the Naengsu-ri stele of Pohang (503) is "September 25 of the Gyemi year (fourth year of Jijeung's reign, 503)." Meanwhile, on the Bongpyeong stele of Uljin (524), one reads "January fifteenth of the Gapjin year (eleventh year of Beopheung's reign, 524)." These examples indicate that by the reigns of the sixth-century rulers like Jijeung, Beopheung, and Jinheung, writing dates with the sexagenary year, month, and date had become customary.

Two epigraphs that merit particular attention concerning Silla's date system are the Sunsubi of Hwangchoryeong and Sunsubi of Maunnyeong, both commemorating King Jinheung's tour of borderland regions. These epigraphs raise the possibility that during Jinheung's reign, the Tianbao calendar of Northern Qi, a dynasty with which Silla had official diplomatic ties in the form of an investiture-tributary relationship, was in use. The calendar in use during Jinheung's reign could also have been Daming li, the Liang calendar that was utilized in the Jin Dynasty. Although this second possibility cannot be ruled out completely, the date found on the Maunnyeong stele is clearly not a date of Northern Zhou's calendar, but is a date according to Northern Qi's *Tianbao* calendar. At any rate, the Maunnyeong stele is evidence that calendars were already in use in Silla even before the adoption of Linde li during King Munmu's reign.

"Record of Silla" in *Samguk sagi* about the New Year's Day ritual held in the royal palace-Jowonjeon Hall-in the fifth year of Queen Jindeok's reign (second Yonghui year (Tang Dynasty era name); 651). This event was dated as the *Sagil* [first day] of *Jeongwol* [first month]. The next are the entries from King Munmu's reign followed by those from the reigns of Sinmun and Hyoso. There is also an epigraph dated the thirtieth (*Imsin*) of lunar May, the second year of *Zhongzong Shenlong* (fifth year of King Seongdeok's reign; 706)…" Here, the lunar month of May is an even month with thirty days, as in the Linde calendar.

Moreover, the lunar month of March in the date found engraved on the pagodite sarira reliquary with the year inscription "second *Yeongtae* (Yongtai) year"—"the thirtieth day (*Euryu*) of lunar March, second *Yongtai*

year (second year of King Hyegong's reign; 766), year of Byeongo"—also proved to be an even month with thirty days, conforming to the number of days in the corresponding month of the *Wuji* calendar (763-783) then in use. This epigraph therefore points to the utilization of the Wuji calendar in Silla during the mid- to late eighth century.

Now, let us return to the "Record of Silla" in *Samguk sagi* for the entry dated the first day (Imsul) of lunar May of the second year of King Aejang's rule (801; seventeenth year of Tang Dezong Zhenyuan). The entry is about a solar eclipse predicted for this date, which in fact did not occur. This was during the period in which the Zhenyuan calendar (784-806) was in use in Silla, and the date indeed conforms to the latter calendar. This article has been frequently cited as proof that the independent prediction of solar eclipses was practiced in Silla. However, considering how Chinese calendars were used in Silla, and how these calendars contained projected dates of a solar eclipse, what happened could be simply that they waited for a solar eclipse to occur based on the prediction found in the Chinese calendar.

Next is the date figuring on the stele of Sinhaeng seonsa (813) at Dansoksa Temple in Sancheong, which corresponds to a date in the Guanxiang calendar (807-821). This date, complete with the stems and branches of the year, month, and day, constitutes conclusive evidence that the Guanxiang calendar was indeed in use in Silla. As for the date figured on the flagpole supports of Jungchosa Temple in Anyang, it is according to Xuanming li (822-892), the late Tang Dynasty calendar. Finally, in various epitaphs composed by Choe Chi-won, including the one on the stupa stele of Nanghye hwasang (890) in Seongju, we also find evidence of the utilization of the Hindu calendar in Silla. Other evidence to this effect includes the annotations to the *Suvarnaprabhasa Su*tra [Sutra of Golden Light] by Wonhyo, Gyeongheung, and Seungjang. These sources suggest the possibility that the date system of the Hindu calendar based on the white and black moons was used in Silla for selection of days of observance and other days of religious events.

## Weights and Measures

Weights and measures are tools for measuring the dimensions, volume, or weight of an object. Having a standardized system of weights and measures is essential in any society and a necessary prerequisite for basic activities like collection of taxes, distribution of goods, and civil engineering.

### Length

The weights and measures used in ancient Korean societies originate from China, where a comprehensive standardized system was established during the Han Dynasty. According to *Lulizhi* [Treatise on the Rhythm and the Calendar] of Hanshu, weight and measurement units were standardized based on huangzhong [yellow bell] pipe, the base note in the musical system of twelve notes. Using black proso millet grains, the yellow bell pipe was divided into ninety sections. Each of these ninety sections was called one *fen* (*bun* in Korean). Ten fen was one *cun* (*chon*), ten cun one *chi* (*cheok*), ten chi one *zhang* (*jang*), and ten zhang one *yin* (*in*). Fen, cun, chi, zhang, and yin, forming a decimal system of length measures, were together called the five degrees.

In Silla whose system of weights and measures was borrowed from China, these length measures were widely used as well, with cheok and chon used particularly frequently. The unit jang, as exemplified by Jangyuksang [literally "statue measuring one jang and six cheok"] of Hwangnyongsa, was used to express the length of a temple bell, cliff, stone pagoda, or a Buddhist stature. However, no record of utilization of in and bun exists.

The bo (bu in Chinese) is a unit of length that was used to express the measurements of a fortress, embankment, or a building, the circumference of a city or a village, or the size of a piece of fabric. In Silla, one bo was six cheok from the beginning and remained unchanged even after one bo became five cheok in the Tang Dynasty in 624. There was also the sim, another unit of length, although it was rarely used. "Sim," an ancient word meaning the distance between the thumb and the little finger when the hand is completely stretched out, later became a unit of length. One sim is equal to about eight cheok. In Silla, the sim was used most often to measure the length of silk fabrics and structures like embankments or levees.

There were also other units used to express the length of hemp or silk fabrics, such as *dan*, *pil* (匹), or *pil* (疋). The pil (匹) and pil (疋), originally referring to the quantity of fabrics of a certain area, came to be used as units of length as well. In China, one pil (匹) and one pil (疋) had been equivalent to forty cheok since the Han Dynasty. In Silla as well, the pil (匹) and pil (疋) were interchangeable and used to express the length of silk and damask silk.

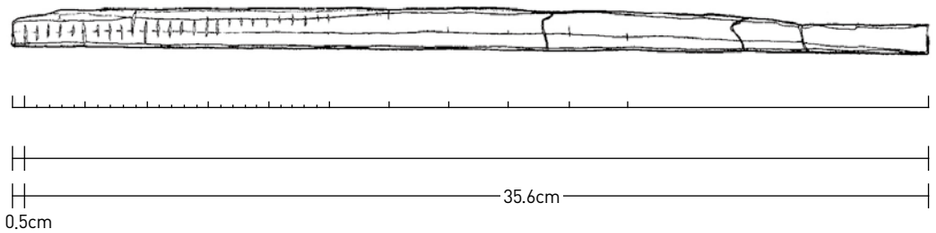



Fig 150 35.6 cm-long yardstick discovered in Zone C of Iseong Mountain Fortress, Hanam

Otherwise, there were also the ju, equivalent to two cheok or one cheok and five chon; the wi, which was used for the circumference or perimeter of an object and corresponded to about eight chon, and; the sa, which was used for distances marched by troops and corresponded to thirty ri.

It is not clearly known what type of scale was originally used in Silla. However, given that the measurement system used in Silla was brought from Han China, the scale is likely to have been the Han scale. Evidence to this effect is provided by the yardstick discovered in Iseong Mountain Fortress in Hanam <Fig 150>.

Although the overall length of this yardstick is 36.1 cm, the length that is actually useful for measurement is only 35.6 m, as there is a margin of 0.5 cm at either end. The 35.6 cm-long yardstick has three divisions. The first division is again subdivided into five units, each of which is in turn subdivided into five smaller units. The second division has five graduations that are not further divided. The third division is not graduated at all. The smallest graduation is 0.47 cm long, and the medium graduation 2.37 cm long. The first and second divisions, comprising ten medium graduations, together measure 23.7 cm. From this yardstick, used in Iseong Mountain Fortress in the mid-sixth century, we can deduce that one cheok equaled 23.7 cm in Silla of the Three Kingdoms period.

Along with the Han scale, the Goguryeo scale was also probably used in Silla during the Three Kingdoms period. The Goguryeo scale was independently by Goguryeo, and one cheok according to this scale was 35.6 cm, which is 1.2 times one cheok during the Tang Dynasty (29.7 cm). One Goguryeo cheok is therefore exactly the same as the length of the yardstick discovered in Iseong Mountain Fortress. The Goguryeo scale appears to have been a scale newly developed by sizing one cheok to 1.5 times of the old cheok. In Silla, the Goguryeo cheok was used for the measurement of





Fig 151 29.8 cm-long yardstick excavated in Iseong Mountain Fortress (water reservoir site in zone C); side view (top) and front view (bottom), Hanam

city blocks or farmland, and the Silla capital had progressively expanded since the sixth century. Although there are various views about the size of city blocks as well as the width of roads in the capital, if one supposes that a block extended 162 m east to west and 144 m north to south, this corresponds to 450 and 400 Goguryeo cheok respectively. The fact that the lengths of city blocks are in whole numbers, when converted to Goguryeo cheok, hints at the possibility that this unit was indeed used in Silla.

To sum up, the scale utilized in Silla was the Han scale, introduced from China during the Three Kingdoms Period, but the Goguryeo scale was also later adopted for use in urban planning and land measurement. Even after the adoption of the Goguryeo cheok, the Han cheok remained in use, particularly for measuring people's height. All this, however, changed once into the seventh century when the Tang cheok was introduced. In Tang China, in the eighth year of Emperor Wude's reign (624), the southern dynasties chi (24.7 cm) was adopted as the small chi, with the large chi set to 29.7 cm, or 1.2 times the small chi. This new scale was the Tang cheok introduced to Silla.

A conclusive piece of evidence attesting to the use of the large Tang cheok in Silla is the 29.8 cm-long yardstick unearthed in Iseong Mountain Fortress in Hanam. This yardstick discovered in the fourth cultural layer in the water reservoir site in zone C has only the chon graduations. The yardstick is presumed to date from the late seventh century; the Goguryeo-cheok yardstick mentioned earlier was found in the layer immediately below it.

The large Tang cheok appears to have been introduced in Silla in the fifth year of King Munmu's reign (665). According to written sources, one pil of silk fabrics that previously equaled ten sim was changed to equal seven bo in

length and two cheok in width. One sim being eight cheok, ten sim is eighty cheok, and one bo being six cheok, seven bo is forty-two cheok. Such a change in sewing measurements occurred without a doubt in parallel with the implementation of a new scale, which is likely to have been the Tang scale.

The large Tang cheok was widely used for carpenters' rulers until the late Silla period. On the wall of Sindae-ri Fortress, constructed in 722 (twenty-first year of King Seongdeok's reign) as a bulwark against Japanese attack, we find engraved the length of wall sections of which the various teams of builders were in charge, expressed in large Tang cheok. Likewise, the height of Gilsang Pagoda in Haeinsa Tempe, erected in 895 (ninth year of King Jinseong's reign) as recorded on the pagoda tablet, is also expressed in large Tang cheok.

In sum, the Han cheok was used in Silla for bodily measurements starting in the seventh century. In the mid-seventh century, the large Tang cheok, corresponding to 29.4-29.8 ㎝, was introduced and widely used in carpenters' rulers. Meanwhile, there is no clear evidence as to whether the Goguryeo cheok, which was used during the Three Kingdoms period for urban planning and the measurement of farmland, remained in use from the seventh century onward. If one considers how the standard cheok in early Goryeo was approximately 31-31.5 ㎝, and how one gyeol (unit of area equivalent to 30 bo by 30 bo) was calculated during this period in the same way as in Silla, the cheok used in Silla for measurement of farmland is more likely to have been the large Tang cheok than the Goguryeo cheok. Hence, based on the information currently available, it is more reasonable to assume that the cheok used in Silla in carpentry and land survey was closer to the large Tang cheok than to the Goguryeo cheok.

### Volume

According to Lulizhi of Hanshu, the basic units of volume in Han China were *yue(yak), he(hop), sheng(seung), duo(du)* and *hu(gok)*. One he is said to be equivalent to two yue, one sheng to ten he, one duo to ten sheng, and one hu to ten duo. After the Han Dynasty, yue was no longer used, and a new unit called "shao," corresponding to one-tenth of one he, appeared at some point in time. Moreover, shi (seok), which was originally a unit of weight equivalent to one hundred twenty jin (geun), came to be used as a unit of volume. In Song China, shi and hu were distinct, with one shi equaling ten duo, and one hu five duo.





Units of volume utilized in Silla include hop, *doe*(升), *doe*(刀), mal, *seom*(斛), *seom*(石), *seom*(碩), and *seom*(苫). Although hop is the smallest unit of volume referenced in written records, *jak*(*shao* in Chinese), equivalent to one-tenth of one hop, is conjectured to have existed. The doe(升) is said to correspond to the "volume that can be grasped by two hands." Meanwhile, "doe" is written in the Silla document "Jwaparigaban"—in the collection of Shosoin in Japan—with the Chinese character "刀" Before the arrival of the Chinese system of volumes, Silla people used their own units of volume like doe and mal, which were continuously in use even after the introduction of Chinese units like hop, doe(升), du, and seom(石).

Units that were larger than the du include seom(斛), seom/seok(石), seom(碩), and seom(苫). Of these, seom(石) was the most commonly used. An entry in *Samguk sagi* states that in 755 (fourteenth year of King Gyeongdeok's reign), three hundred gok of millet was offered to Hyangdeok, a pious son, and that following this example, three hundred seok of millet was given to Seonggak as a reward for his filial piety during the reign of King Seongdeok. Based on this record, we know that gok and seok were exactly the same unit of volume, although they were different words that were also pronounced differently.

'苫, mostly pronounced *jeom*, denotes a straw-woven mat. In Silla, this word was also a unit of volume for grains, in which case it was pronounced "seom." One seom equals two gamani or bags (one bag being 100 liters), and one gamani is five mal. Therefore, one seom is equivalent to ten mal, hence the same as one seok. In other words, the unit seom(苫) as it was used in the late ninth century was identical to seom/seok(石), seom(斛), or seom(碩). Aside from 苫, the only one among 石, 斛 and 碩 noted in documents and epigraphs that was actually used was 石. This leads us to believe that the official unit of volume in Silla was 石.

From the aforementioned Silla document "Jwaparigaban," we also know how many du constituted one seok. Believed to have been drafted sometime in the eighth century, this document records salaries issued to government officials, which were in amounts of grains.

When the volume units were standardized for the first time, it was likely based on the Chinese volume units, which must have been adopted along with the Chinese length units. As such, there is a strong possibility that one seok was initially ten du, as was the case in Han China.

It appears that sometime before the eighth century, one seok came to

equal twenty du instead of ten du. The most likely timing of this doubling of the volume represented by one seok is during the seventh century. Around this time, the fall of Baekje and Goguryeo resulted in a massive increase in Silla's territorial expanse and a sharp growth in its agricultural productivity. The Tang cheok was also adopted at this time, most likely accompanied by the increase of the volume represented by one seok, again under the influence of the Tang system.

In the ninth century, one seok was again changed to fifteen du. In the epigraph on the Sungboksa Temple stele composed in 896 (tenth year of King Jinseong's reign) by Choe Chi-won, one reads, "It was paid for with two thousand jeom of rice." According to Choe Hae (1287-1340), a scholar of late Goryeo who commented on the epigraph, the jeom was the same unit of volume as the seok, equivalent to fifteen du. In late Silla, one seung, previously equivalent to approximately 200 ml, became 350 ml. One seok might have been readjusted to fifteen du from twenty when one seung and du (one du being ten seung) became larger volumes.

Fig 152 Jar with inscription "contains 10 seok" excavated from Wolji(Anapji)





In Han China, one seung corresponded to about 200 ml, also true in Silla of the early eighth century. It is only in the late Silla period that one seung was increased to 350 ml. This figure was obtained through a calculation based on inscriptions on the surface of two pieces of pottery found in Anapji in Gyeongju; "四斗五刀 [Four du and five doe]" and "十石入瓮 [Jar of Ten seok]." The capacity of the pottery jar with the inscription "four du and five doe," or forty-five seung, if measured including the neck and the mouth, is about 16 l=16,000 ml. This means that one seung is about 355 ml. Since this figure was obtained by including the mouth area in the calculation, the actual volume of one seung is probably slightly less than 355 ml. The pottery jar with the inscription "ten seok" has a capacity of 520.8 l=520,800 ml. If we suppose one seok equals fifteen du, one du is 3,472 ml, and one seung 347.2 ml. In sum, one seung is in the range of 347 ml-to 355 ml, or roughly 350 ml.

### Weight

In Han China, there existed five units of weight: *zhu (su), liang (yang), jin (geun), jun (gyun), and shi (seok).* One zhu corresponds to the weight of one hundred millet grains, and one liang to twenty-four zhu. One jin is sixteen liang, one jun thirty jin, and one shi four jun. The shi, however, became progressively used as a unit of volume rather than a unit of weight. For instance, the *Kaiyuan tongbao*, the early Tang Dynasty coin, was two zhu and four lei, and ten of them together weighed one liang. The qian, one tenth of one liang, was later created, with a decimal system of liang, qian, fen, and li eventually becoming established.

In Silla, geun, yang, and pun (jin, liang and fen in Chinese) were the main units of weight. The geun was used to express the weight of brass, and yang, the weight of gold and silver. The pun, one hundredth of the yang, was used to express the weight of gold, iron, and mercury. As was the case in China, the geun and yang were the most commonly used units of weight in Silla.

The weight represented by one geun can be guessed through inscriptions on objects or calibration weights. During Han China, one geun is estimated to have been about 248 g. As is the case with the length and volume units, units of weight also increased in size over time. During the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasty period, one geun increased to approximately 500 g. The weight of one geun further increased during the Sui and Tang Dynasties to over 600 g.

No calibration weights or any other artifacts that can indicate the exact weight of one geun in Silla have survived. Among the available evidence allowing us to roughly guess is the Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok, cast in 771 (seventh year of King Hyegong's reign). One hundred and twenty thousand geun of copper is said to have been used to cast this bell which, according to a 1997 measurement, weighs approximately 18,900 龍. If we divide this weight by the number of geun, one geun is about 157.5 g.

However, this is far too small, even when compared to the weight of one geun during the Han Dynasty when one geun was at its smallest. Therefore, one hundred twenty thousand geun might not be the weight of the bell itself but, instead the entire amount of copper used during the process of casting it, given that there is some loss of copper during this process. Accordingly, one geun in Silla of the eighth century may be closer to 200 g, which is a figure more comparable to the weight of one geun in the Han Dynasty.

## Medicine

The term *uiyak* meaning medicine in Korean is a composite word made up of *ui* and *yak*. The term *ui* designates the science or practice of treatment of disease. It can also mean a person engaged in such practice. Meanwhile, *yak* means a compound or preparation for treatment of disease.

### Medicine from the Saroguk to the Middle Ancient Period

In early Silla, medicine appears to have consisted of little more than healing practices based on black magic or folk remedies. Even royals who received the best available medical care were treated by shaman doctors who performed incantations and administered simple remedies. The mugwort and garlic that the bear and the tiger were ordered to eat in the Dangun myth, for instance, are believed to have been common remedies prescribed by shaman doctors. These primitive remedies were eventually combined with folk cures to form the basis of Silla's pharmacology.

A pharmacist is mentioned in the epigraph of the Maullyeong Sunsu stele erected in 568. It is evident, then, that medical officers in charge of herbal medicine already existed in the royal palace no later than in King Jinheung's time. However, these officers' role in treatment of disease waned, as Buddhism





gained influence in Silla society. A tale about the treatment of the princess of King Nulji (or Michu) reflects this tendency. According to this tale, the princess took ill but did not recuperate from her illness while medical officers took care of her. It was a Buddhist monk (named Ado or Mukhoja) who cured her.

Following the arrival of Buddhism, the field of medicine was now led by Buddhist monks, which also resulted in competition between temples and between monk doctors. When Queen Seondeok fell ill, for instance, she was seen by a monk from Heungnyunsa, who was her regular physician, but was later treated by Milbon beopsa, a monk doctor of esoteric Buddhism who bested her regular physician in healing knowledge. This story provides a measure of the competition that existed among Buddhist monk doctors who replaced shaman doctors as medical practitioners for the ruling elite. However, the authority and role of shaman doctors remained undiminished among the common folk. Over time, shaman doctors appear to have become providers of medical care for the populace in this period where there was a great paucity of experts worthy of the term doctor.

### Silla Remedies

Silla's home-grown remedies are known to us through medical texts such as Weilingxianchuan and Silla-beopsabang, although they date from the eighth to the ninth centuries. These remedies are examples casting light on the state of Silla's native medicine shortly after the unification of the Three Kingdoms and before it became heavily influenced by the Chinese medicine of the Tang Dynasty.

Weilingxianchuan, written by a certain Zhou Junchao during the Zhenyuan era of the Tang Dynasty, records remedies based on the root of Chinese clematis, known through a Silla monk studying in China. These clematis remedies were said to cure serious diseases. Of note is the fact that the monk is said to have known only the Silla name of this herb, *hyangmyeong*. It is evident that the Silla monk had very little knowledge of Tang Dynasty medicine, suggesting that these clematis preparations were Silla's own native remedies, even if they became known in China during the eighth century and were used there subsequently.

In Ishinpo, a Japanese medical text compiled in 984 by Tamba Yasuyori, we find four remedies taken from Silla-beopsabang. Although we do not know exactly when it was written, Silla-beopsabang is believed to date from the mid-eighth century around King Gyeongdeok (742-764)'s time, or later.

The text for instance describes remedies for jeokchwi, a condition in which painful lumps are formed inside the abdominal cavity. Although this text was written in the eighth century or later, the remedies related there are age-old remedies handed down from previous eras.

The remedies surviving from the Silla period were distinct from those of Chinese medicine. Medicinal herbs were known in Silla under names different from Chinese ones, and their use was also distinct, indicating that Silla had its home-grown body of medical knowledge.

### Medicine during Unification Wars and After the Unification

It is important to note that the unification wars in the mid-seventh century waged by Silla not only encompassed Goguryeo and Baekje, but also brought to the Korean peninsula soldiers of various ethnicities, ranging from the Tang Chinese, the Turkic and Uighur troops belonging to the Tang Army, and the Mohe troops enlisted by Goguryeo, to the Japanese troops fighting for Baekje. When these troops from various corners of Asia gathered on the Korean peninsula, they brought with them the diseases of their home regions. Meanwhile, as Silla fought in coalition with Tang Chinese forces, Silla people had hands-on opportunities to learn Chinese medicine from Chinese army doctors.

To understand the state of military medicine at that time, let us look at the list of medicines Kim Yu-sin sent to Su Dingfang, the Tang General who sieged Pyeongyang in 662. Along with food, thirty nyang of human hair and nineteen nyang of ox bezoars are said to have been delivered to the Tang General. Furthermore, in August of the twelfth year of Munmu's reign, Silla sent a series of goods to the Tang Dynasty, together with a letter of apology. Silver and copper were among them, as well as human hair, needles, ox bezoar, and gold. Of these, the human hair, ox bezoars, needles, and gold appear to have been intended for medical use. Meanwhile, the fact that Kim Yu-sin's troops procured human hair in the mid-winter to deliver it to Su Dingfang suggests that there were frequent outbreaks of diseases for which this remedy was used, such as food poisoning, skin disease, venereal disease, and frost bite.

Ox bezoars were used as a pain reliever and an antipyretic, and those produced in Silla were particularly prized and exported to Tang China. Magnets, meanwhile, were used as a styptic remedy. In April of 669 (ninth year of King Munmu's reign), Silla is recorded to have sent two cases of





magnets to the Tang upon request. Having had the opportunity to test the excellent magnets of Silla when it fought in the Korean peninsula as the latter's ally during the unification wars, the Tang Dynasty appears to have put in a special request for them at a time when it was engaged in war against the Tibetan Empire. Magnets were used to treat edged weapon-caused wounds with exposed internal organs or heavy bleeding, or high fever. Although quite a mystifying choice of remedy from today's point of view, the magnet-based treatment was developed to treat combat injuries in the absence of a better solution at that time.

After the unification of the Three Kingdoms in 692, Uihak, an educational institution for medical studies, was established in Silla in accordance with the standards set in the Medical Order of the Tang Dynasty. Various medicine-related administrative mechanisms were also set up at this time. Two most important medical concerns at that time were the health of the king and members of the aristocratic class and the health of the army personnel and others living in large groups in an institutionalized environment. The royals and aristocrats were the first to receive medical attention, and government doctors were dispatched to the army and other large institutions. The special attention paid to people in group living arrangements was in large part due to the need to prevent and control epidemics and other contagious diseases. This was something unheard of in the preceding Middle Ancient period.

By the mid-Silla period, there were various different medical officers in the royal court, including Medical Doctors and Acupuncture Doctors with educational functions, and court physicians in charge of providing medical care to the king and aristocrats. These people were at the helm of Silla's health care administration. Medical officers were selected among graduates of the state-run medical school who successfully passed a qualification examination. Others with outstanding medical skills were admitted into the medical system through special recruitment channels, even if they failed to qualify based on education or test requirements. In the medical school, acupuncture-related learning accounted for over half of all instructional content, demonstrating the importance accorded to acupuncture in Silla.

Government physicians educated in Uihak were the main actors in the medical field of the Unified Silla period. These physicians appear to have practiced medicine as they were taught in Uihak, in other words, according to Tang-Dynasty medicine. A fine example of this is the prescription by the physician who was sent to treat Prince Chunggong, the younger brother

of the king in 822 (fourteenth year of Heondeok's reign). He prescribed an herbal infusion called *Yongchitang* for the prince's ailment. Yongchitang (longchitang in Chinese) was a remedy listed in numerous medical texts from the Tang Dynasty, and Silla physicians followed Chinese treatment protocols.

Another source of information about medicines prescribed by government doctors during the Unified Silla is prescription mokgan, the wooden writing tablets. Of the twenty total writing tablets discovered in the moat of Wolseong, which are mostly from the sixth to the seventh centuries, No. 167 contains names of herbal medicine ingredients. One thing that is remarkable about this prescription is that it lists some of the ingredients that are said to have been used mainly for strengthening sexual function, but are known toxins in very large amounts. This prescription written by a court doctor to increase the king's sexual vigor could be for pills rather than infusions.

Meanwhile, the writing tablets discovered at Anapji are mostly from the eighth century. Writing tablet No. 198 is densely written on all four sides with names of medicinal ingredients. This tablet is presumed to be either a study tablet on which various remedies from medical texts have been jotted down or an actual prescription that was discarded by a pharmacist after preparing a remedy according to the instructions provided. The preparation on this writing tablet is highly similar to one of the preparations found in the Tang medical text *Waitai miayo* [Arcane Essentials from the Imperial Library]. Given the large quantities of ingredients prescribed, the tablet could contain instructions for production of pills in massive amounts.

The yongchitang administered to Chunggong during King Heondeok's reign is an infusion with yongchi, or fossilized mammal teeth, as its main ingredient. This may be interpreted as an indication that medicinal ingredients were actively imported from China into Silla at that time. As for locally produced medicinal ingredients, ginseng and ox bezoars are mentioned in Chinese and Japanese texts, along with clematis roots discussed earlier. Medicinal ingredients were important export products to Japan. In 752 (eleventh year of King Gyeongdeok's reign), a large delegation of seven hundred was sent to Japan to attend the ceremony to consecrate the Vairocana statue at Todaiji Temple. The Silla envoys also traded with Japanese aristocrats, and the details of their transactions are known through the document "Mae Silla-mul-hae," which is a sort of purchase record. Of the items sold to the Japanese on this occasion, medicinal ingredients included musk, ginseng, ox bezoars, and licorice. As musk and licorice were products from the West or China, Silla must have





engaged in entrepot trade of medicinal ingredients.

There is also a record related to the donation of items of the Japanese imperial family to Todaiji Temple by the widowed empress consort to Emperor Shomu who passed away on June 21, 756. A document ('種種藥帳') on donated medicines that is part of this record lists sixty varieties of medicines. Sixteen of these sixty items, including musk, are items imported from Silla. *Jaseol* and *geumseongneung* were expensive medicines, containing two nyang or one hundred nyang of gold. One possibility this suggests is that Silla imported medicinal ingredients from China and concocted medicines by adding gold to export them to Japan at high prices. The medical advances made in the Unified Silla period enabled further progress during the Goryeo Dynasty. As exemplified by Seol Gyeong-seong, one of the most prominent physicians of Goryeo who descended from the Silla scholar Seol Chong, Goryeo physicians of Silla descent laid the foundation for Korean medieval medicine. The Korean medical system retained many of the basic characteristics acquired during the Unified Silla period until the arrival of Western medicine in the nineteenth century.

## Craft and Industrial Production

Among main examples of craft and industries in Silla are metallurgy-including coloring and plating metals-glass making, gemstone sculpting, mother-of-pearl lacquerware craft, namtae, dry lacquer craft, textile weaving and dyeing, and tannery. The stock of knowledge and techniques in these various fields were built in Silla over a long time and originated mostly from endogenous sources. Some techniques have survived to the present, while some have died out.

### Gold Refining and Processing

The tombs of Silla, famously known as the "Golden Kingdom," have yielded an impressive array of gold objects. Gold is obtained from gold ores through a multi-stage process. The gold power thus obtained still contains impurities that need to be eliminated through a refining process. There are two main types of techniques used for refining gold. One is called cupellation, a process in which gold powder is heated to a high temperature together with lead to create a fused alloy of gold (Au) and lead (Pb). Lead

Fig 153 Earring excavated from the Hapjang Tomb, Bomun-dong, Gyeongju

Fig 154 Detail of earrings made through granulation excavated from the Bubuchong tomb in Bomun-ri, Gyeongju





is then separated, using finely crushed bone meal. The other method is amalgamation, which consists of bringing gold particles mixed with impurities into contact with mercury, and then evaporating the mercury by heating the amalgam to an elevated temperature. The guess is that people in Silla were aware of and used one or both of these methods as needed.

The gold so obtained was processed most often into gold sheets or wire. Gold sheets and wire were then cut to a desired size, bent to shape, or perforated. A method which is slightly more advanced and complicated than these basic steps of cutting and shaping is granulation, which refers to attaching fine gold granules to the surface of an object <Fig 154>. An analysis using the latest scientific techniques revealed that, in Silla, gold granules were affixed to the surface of objects by either soldering or welding. When the granules were soldered, gold or a gold amalgam was used as the solder. When they were welded, gold granules or wire were joined to the surface of a gold sheet by applying pressure while heating them to a temperature below the melting point. The gold solder used in Silla is believed to be an amalgam containing 2-5 % of silver and 2 % of copper, which brings down the melting point by 100 ℃-50 ℃. However, it is unclear which of these two methods was preferred by Silla artisans.

**Iron Forging and Casting**

Korean people possessed advanced iron-making techniques already by the Silla period. The various excavation projects carried out intermittently since 1990 have led to the discovery of ancient sites of forging workshops going back to the first century BC and twenty third-century furnace sites within an area that seems to have been an iron tool production complex where both forging and casting processes were performed. In Silla tombs, cast iron axe heads believed to have been used as picks were buried as grave goods in significant quantities from the first century BC. Thus, the stock of iron-making knowledge appears to have been accumulated in Silla since the inception of the kingdom. In the latter part of the Unified Silla period, they also made cast iron Buddha statues. The experience of casting the gigantic Sacred Bell of King Seongdeok during the middle period must have helped in later eras for casting large iron Buddhas. The seated Vairocana of Borimsa, cast in the late part of the Unified Silla period (858), is a prime example.

This iron Buddha, 273.5 cm in seated height, was created through a six-stage process: (1) a wooden core is constructed, and (2) the wooden core

is plastered with clay to make a model having the same appearance as the planned statue <Fig 155>. (3) The clay model is then covered with a layer of mulberry paper or talcum powder so that it can be easily separated from the mold, which is created later around it. The model is then plastered with heat-resistant mold clay, and a clay paste mixed with sand added on top of the mold clay. The mold is completed by coating the model with a third layer of clay, this time mixed with straw or husks. When the mold is hardened, it is cut into several sections and removed from the model <Fig 156>. (4) After removing the mold, a layer of the clay model, usually about 5 cm thick, is shaved off to create room for molten iron <Fig 157>. (5) The pieces of the mold are then reassembled around the clay model. To keep the space between the model and the mold even, metal spacers are inserted or iron nails are used to hold them in place. One or several holes are created on the mold to pour in molten iron. The number of holes depends on the size of the cast object <Fig 158>. (6) Molten iron is poured into the space between the model and the mold, and when the molten metal is cooled and hardened, the mold is removed. Any casting flaws are repaired,

Fig 155 Wooden core and clay model construction

Fig 156 Clay plaster added to exterior

Fig 157 Clay model shaved off a layer for casting

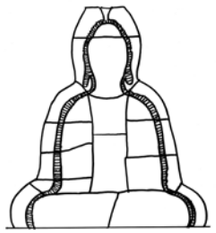


Fig 158 Mold is completed

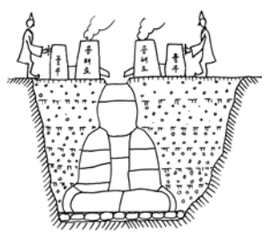


Fig 159 Casting work



and rough patches on the surface of the cast object are smoothened <Fig 159>. Finally, separately cast parts such as the hair curls and hands are joined to the statue, which is then gilt across its entire surface.



**Lacquerware Craft**

Used to varnish or color wooden objects, lacquer is also applied to wooden items to create a protective coat that prevents them from rusting or decaying. During the Silla period, most pigments and varnishes were obtained from natural sources. The most commonly used ones were lacquer, camellia oil, beeswax, pine sap, and natural pigments.

Korean lacquerware craft, going back to prehistoric times, had already reached an advanced level by the Proto-three Kingdoms (Samhan) period. During the Three Kingdoms period, further improved lacquerware craft techniques emerged. Not only was lacquer refined before use, but many innovative ways of applying lacquer were also introduced. Before the application of the lacquer, the wooden object was first covered with a layer of fabric. Moreover, lacquer was now applied in several coats. The base coat was usually mixed with various additives to protect the wooden item and better support the top coats. Lacquer used for top coats came in great variety, and equally varied were the ways of applying it. The technical improvements resulted in a massive increase in the production of lacquerware items. In the royal palace, Chiljeon, an agency overseeing lacquerware production, was established to regulate and standardize related techniques.

During the Unified Silla period, new types of bamboo-based lacquerware that were both lighter and sturdier appeared, such as gwontae and namtae lacquerware. A standardized method was established as well for applying lacquer. A piece of fabric was glued to the surface of the wooden object, and two base coats of lacquer were applied onto the fabric. This was followed by several top coats of clear or red lacquer. For base coats, the lacquer was mixed with clay and bone meal. The bone meal was obtained from ox bones that were heated at reducing flames at a high temperature. The ground ox bone, as it increases the resilience of the lacquer coat, made lacquerware items more durable. The floral-shaped lacquerware case discovered at Anapji is a good example of items created using such procedure <Fig 160, 161>.

A novel lacquerware technique that emerged during this period is the pyeongtal technique in which lacquer is applied to the surface of a

Fig 160 Lacquer item excavated from Wolji

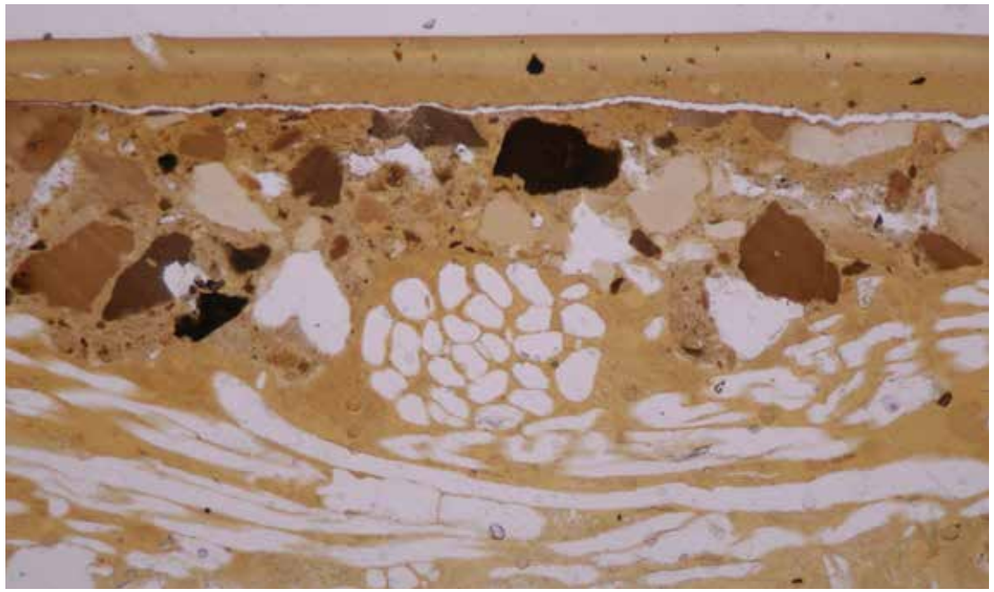


Fig 161 Layer of lacquer as seen under microscope





metal object. For example, the backside of a bronze mirror was adorned with designs in gold and silver, and then the remaining space was filled with lacquer. This not only makes a metal item look more sumptuous, but transforms it into an unexpectedly warm-looking object. Moreover, a pottery glazed with yellow lacquer has been discovered in recent years in the Unified Silla archaeological site in Hwangnam-dong, Gyeongju. Yellow lacquer is the sap obtained from Korean Dendropanax, not from the lacquer trees. This lacquer, appreciated for its golden hue, was a selective lacquer used for exclusive items. This pottery item is evidence that Korean Dendropanax lacquer was first used in lacquerware by Silla artisans. Yellow lacquer remained in use through to the Joseon period, but fell out of use thereafter.

**Paper Making and Dying**

Paper is believed to have been first used on the Korean peninsula in the early Three Kingdoms period. However, little is known with certainty as to how paper was produced at that time or how papermaking evolved over time. Two main examples of surviving paper artifacts are the *Great Dharani Sutra* and the *Avatamsaka Sutra written in ink on white paper*, both from the Unified Silla period.

The *Great Dharani Sutra* <Fig 162> is a 6.2 m-long scroll with a width of 6.7 cm. The scroll is made of twelve interconnected sheets of mulberry

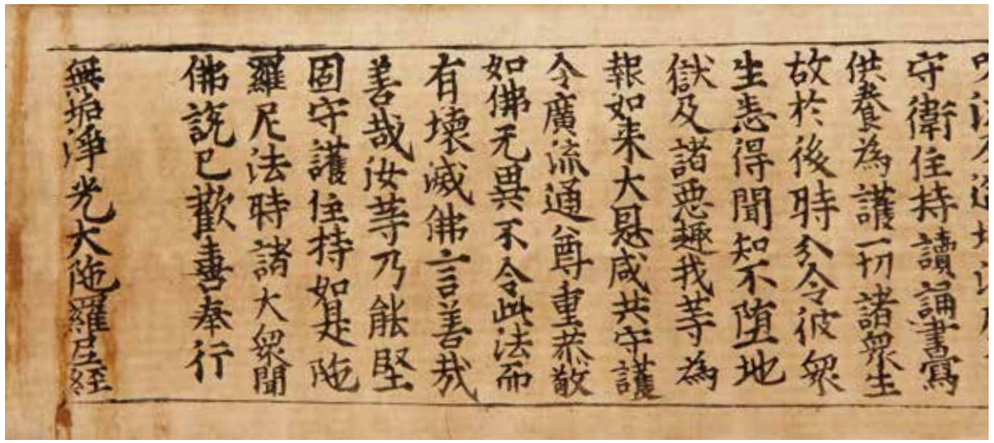


Fig 162 The *Great Dharani Sutra*

paper, each about 54 cm in length. The mulberry paper was made by processing mulberry bark into fine fibers, retting the fibers in water, and scooping them up with the help of a bamboo screen. Next, the paper was tinted with Amur cork tree dye or another similar dye; then, it was placed on a fulling block and was pounded until the desired thickness and density were achieved by a process known as *dochim*. The paper used for printing the *Great Dharani Sutra* not only has the finest texture, but also is twice as strong as ordinary paper although much thinner. This is precisely due to the dochim process. Moreover, the Amur cork tree dye used for this paper has an insect-repellent property, hence the longevity of this sutra which has survived in great condition inside the sarira niche of Seokgatap Pagoda for one thousand three hundred years. This sutra scroll is the oldest extant printed book in the world. The *Avatamsaka Sutra*, on the other hand, is a hand-transcribed book.

The oldest hand-copied sutra from Silla, this sutra scroll is 14 m long and 29.2 cm wide, and was made by interconnecting thirty sheets of white paper. Although thinner than regular mulberry paper (about 0.04 mm in thickness), the paper is three to four times stronger and has excellent elasticity, again owing to the dochim process it underwent. The sutra has a postscript at its tail end, which provides some clues about the papermaking method and procedure used at that time <Fig 163>. We learn, for instance, that mulberry bushes from which the paper pulp is obtained were grown by spraying perfume to their roots. We also know from this postscript that there were artisans specialized in making writing brushes used for the transcription of the sutra or scroll rollers, and that these artisans, along with painters responsible for illustrations, were made to abide by the Bodhisattva precepts. They were required to wash themselves with perfume after using the toilet, before resuming their work, after waking up in the morning, and after eating or drinking, a detail indicative of how much care went into the hand copying of a Buddhist scripture. The paper was specially made for the specific purpose of this sutra transcription project, using the finest materials and to the highest standard.

The purple cover is significant, since purple is not only the emperor's color but also a color considered noble and mysterious in all human societies that ever existed throughout the history of civilization <Fig 164>. Although it is impossible to tell how this cover was dyed purple, we do know, however, a number of traditional methods for dyeing fabrics purple.





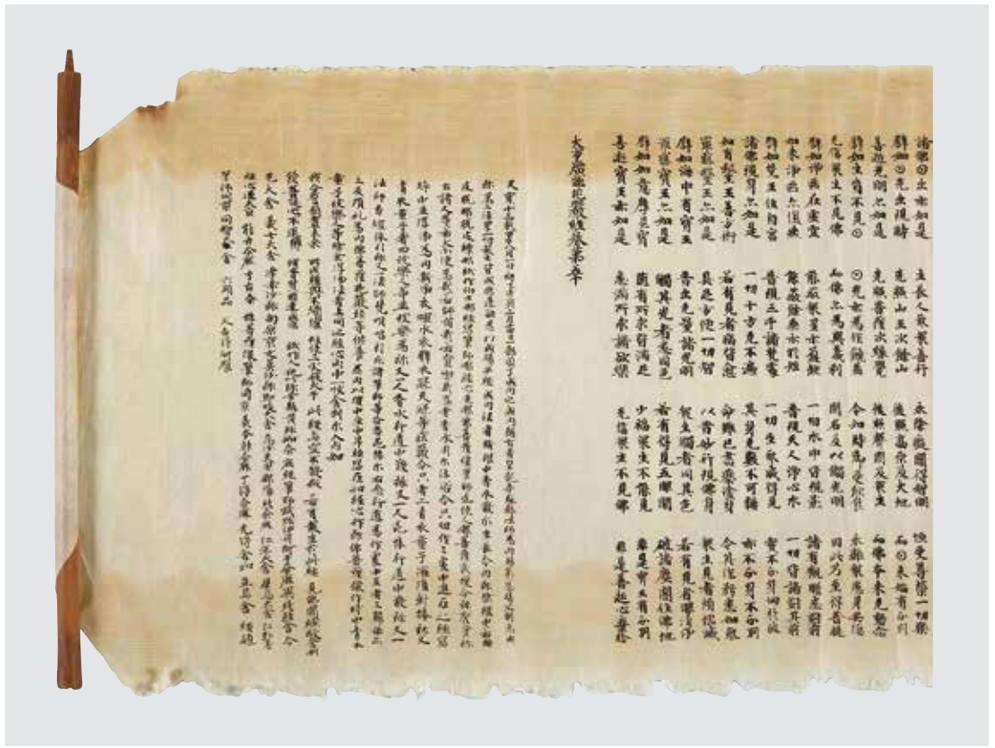


Fig 163 Roll and postscript of the *Huayan Sutra*

One of them is soaking the fabric in a bath made by dissolving the powder obtained by grinding dried gromwell roots in hot water, with some ashes added as a fixative. In order to produce a deep purple, this process should be repeated several times. The extract of sappanwood, used along with iron as the fixative, can also produce a purple similar to the color of the cover of this Avatamsaka Sutra.

However, dyeing paper is far more complicated than dyeing a fabric. When paper is soaked in water, the hydrogen bonds that maintain its rigidity are weakened, causing the fibers to become separated. Furthermore, it has to be dyed multiple times in order to obtain a deep purple tone like that of the cover of this sutra.

Silla paper was mostly mulberry paper, which is

Fig 164 A part of the cover of the *Huayan Sutra*

qualitatively distinct from the hemp paper that was mainly produced in China. Silla mulberry paper was at times referred to as *bibaekji*, which means "white and glossy paper." Exported to Tang China and Japan, Silla paper was considered the finest paper in the region.

## Woodblock Printing in Silla

In Silla woodblock printing started to meet the demand of Buddhist community desiring to enshrine printed scriptures in pagodas, but gradually used for the production of educational materials as well. In the following Goryeo Period (918-1392), woodblock printing found a greater variety of uses including the monumental project for the publication of the entire canon of Buddhist scriptures.

Historical records as well as archaeological evidences show that the use of paper and ink, a precondition for the development of woodblock printing, was widespread across Korea in the sixth and the seventh centuries. There is a historic record, for example, written on a 19 cm-long wooden strip setunearthed at the Wolseong Moat site in Gyeongju about a Buddhist devotee who purchased twelve-geun of paper to copy Buddhist sutras.

The oldest archaeological evidence for the use of paper in Korea include the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* (*Mugujeonggwang Daedaranigyeong*), *Avatamsaka Sutra* in Ink on White Paper (Baekjimukseo Daebanggwangbul Hwaeomgyeong), Dharani Sutra in Ink on White Paper (Baekjimukseo Darani) from a stone pagoda in Hwaeomsa Temple, and Dharani Sutra (Daranigyeong) from a stone pagoda in Nawon-ri, Gyeongju. These relics were made of mulberry paper and smoothed by beating on a fulling board. As for paper used for a non-religious purpose, a fine example is demonstrated by a document about a Silla village contained in the collection of treasures stored in Shoso-in, a treasure house belonging to Todaiji in Nara, Japan. The document contains information of the population, sex of community members, areas of arable land, and crops cultivated by the community in the surveyed Silla village.

As for the inkstick, made by mixing soot, hide glue, and incense, and an essential stationery item for printing, there are four Silla relics remaining today, two in Shosoin, each 26 cm in length and named "High [-quality] Inkstick by the Yang Family in Silla (*Silla Yangga Sangmuk*)" and "High





Brush (Three Kingdoms Period) | Silla Yang Family Inkstick | Silla Mu Family Inkstick | Seokgatap Inkstick

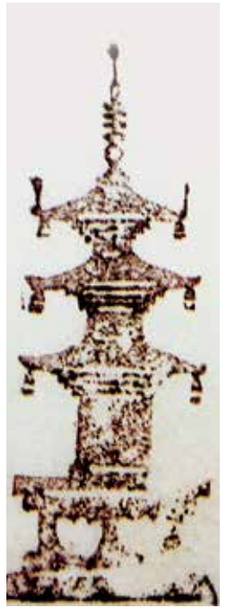
Fig 165 Writing instruments of Silla

[-quality] Inkstick by the Mu Family in Silla (*Silla Muga Sangmuk*)," one in Todaiji Temple in Nara, named "High [-quality] Inkstick by the Yu Family in Silla (Silla Yuga Sangmuk)," and one (5.4 × 4.1 cm) found at the three-story stone pagoda (or Seokgatap) of Bulguksa Temple in Gyeongju <Fig 165>.

In the early phase of woodblock printing in Korea, printers tried to deliver information by pressing a small wooden block, seal, or stamp, engraved with a text directly onto paper. The technique continued to develop so that they were able to use larger blocks and paper to convey more information at a time. Gradually they found that the technique of pressing the engraved woodblock on the paper from above often resulted in poor quality printing due to the difficulty in pressing with even force. Then there appeared a new technique by which the block was placed face side up on a table with the paper on top and the back of the paper was rubbed with a pad. The new technique was sometimes used in the process of filling a designated area on the paper with Buddha or pagoda images by pressing a stamp engraved with them as shown by the Dharani Sutra in Ink on White Paper <Fig 166> found at the West Five-story Stone Pagoda of Hwaeomsa Temple in Gurye.

This particular relic containing a text of Buddhist canon copied from the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* [*Mugujeonggwang Daedaranigyeong*] shows that the pagoda images printed with the dharani text were intended to replace the traditional practice of offering miniature

pagoda statuettes to Buddha in symbolic numbers of 77 or 99. The pagoda images remaining in the printed dharani sutra are arranged in twenty-two rows, each of which consisted of five pagodas. Each pagoda image measures 5.3 cm in height and 2 cm in width of the base, and features a three-story structure complete.



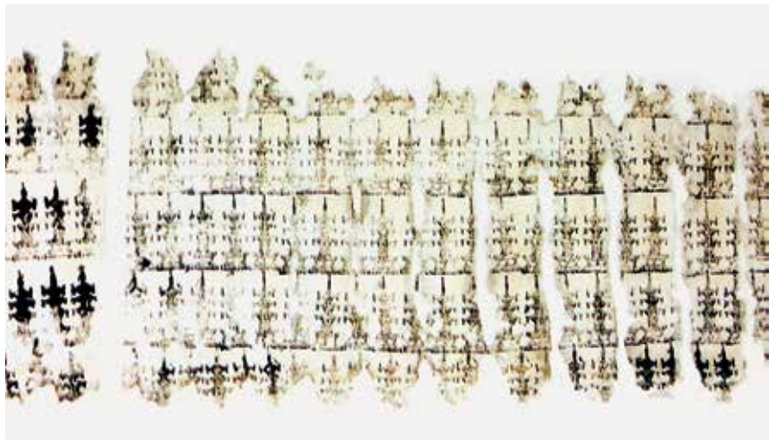


Fig 166 Pagodas printed on the Dharani Sutra discovered at the west five-story stone pagoda of Hwaeomsa Temple. Top is an enlarged version of a pagoda image





The most famous tangible evidence of the development of woodblock printing in Silla, the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* was discovered at the gilt-bronze sarira reliquary container enshrined in the second-story body of the Seokgatap Pagoda in Bulguksa Temple when it was dismantled for repair in 1966. Other relics discovered with the sutra include the Casket Seal Dharani and three documents about the rebuilding of the pagoda found at the bottom of the gilt-bronze sarira reliquary enshrined in the pagoda <Fig 167>. These documents containing the texts about the pagoda were handwritten in 1024 and 1038 when the pagoda was repaired. Details of the texts include a brief chronology about Immaculate and Pure Light Pagoda, or Mugujeonggwangtap, re-enshrinement of sariras, preparation for the repair, donations and expenses, damage by an earthquake and repair in 1038, and a list of contributors. The interpretation of the texts provided background evidence for the world's oldest existing woodblock print.

No one knows exactly how the documents related to the Immaculate and Pure Light Pagoda, which refers to the present-day Dabotap Pagoda, came to be stored in the Seokgatap Pagoda. The general consensus among historians is that the documents made for, and enshrined in, the former in 1024 was moved to the latter during the repairing process in 1038 for both pagodas damaged by an earthquake two years earlier. A text in the documents revealed that the pagodas began to be built in 742, the year when King Gyeongdeok was enthroned, and completed during the reign of King Hyegong (r. 765-780). The text suggests that the xylographic work of the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* <Fig 167> was originally enshrined in the Dabotap Pagoda in 742 and moved to the Seokgatap Pagoda during the repair work that occurred almost three hundred years later.

The *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* discovered at the Seokgatap Pagoda features the form of a scroll printed on mulberry paper by woodblock. The book is 641.9 cm long and made by attaching twelve sheets, each of which is 6.5 to 6.7 cm in width and 52.9 to 55.7 cm in length (44.0 cm for the twelfth sheet). The book is rolled around an axis of 0.29 cm in diameter whose both ends are painted red. The format of the completed book features single-lined top and bottom borders whose lengths are 5.3 to 5.5 cm. The text is arranged in 681 lines, each of which as six to nine characters in regular script.

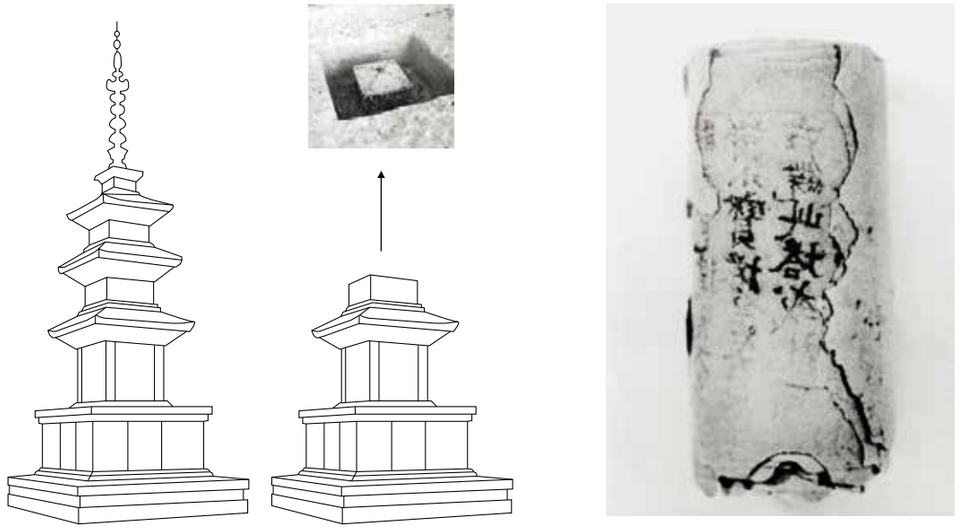


Fig 167 The Sarira casket enshrined at the second story of the Seokgatap Pagoda where the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* was found. Right is The Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light as it was discovered

The paper on which the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* is printed assumes feeble yellowish tints, the result of discoloration with the passage of time on the paper that was originally yellow from being dyed with the Amur cork tree extract. The paper dyed with Amur cork tree is known to be fragrant, resistant to damage by insects, and more durable thanks to the alkaloid components contained in the tree. Dyeing with Amur cork tree also helps prevent spreading of ink.

Experts found that the paper of the Dharani Sutra is twice as dense as the other ordinary mulberry paper, revealing that the paper was produced after the process of beating it with wooden mallet on a fulling block, a process that made it smooth and shiny. The luster of the paper shows that it is the *mature* rather than *raw* paper completed through the polishing process. The technique of dyeing the paper with Amur cork tree and beating it on a fulling board led Silla paper makers to the production of high-quality paper that could control the spread of ink and ensure even printing.

The calligraphic style of the characters printed on the dharani sutra is marked by atypical structures and irregular forms, sharing some similarities





with the inscriptions on the Bongpyeongbi Monument (524) in Uljin and the Namsan Sinseongbi Monument (591) in Gyeongju. The style is particularly close to the inscription of the sarira reliquary enshrined in the Hwangboksa Pagoda in Gyeongju in 706, providing a clue for the discussion of the date when the sutra was printed.

As for the date of publication for the Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light, experts have depended upon either its physical characteristics, such as the material or shape of the book, or its text, the content, and script styles. The sutra contains four characters, *Jeung*(證), *Ji*(地), *Su*(授), and *Cho*(初), in ten places printed by using the Wu Zhou Types made and used in Tang during the reign of Wu Zetian (r. 690-704), showing that it was printed after 704. Since its discovery, the sutra has aroused much controversy among historians in China, Japan, and Korea, as it is understood to have been closely connected to the origin of woodblock printing. Before the discovery of the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light*, it had been generally agreed that the Hyakumanto Darani, or One Million Pagodas and Dharani Prayers, published in Japan approximately in 770 was the oldest extant work of woodblock printing. The text of the dharani consists of four prayers selected from the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light*, each focusing on the root consciousness, self-heart seal, pagoda finial, and the six perfections.

Some Chinese scholars have recently begun to argue from the Wu Zhou Types used for the dharani sutra that the woodblocks used for its publication were carved in Tang and brought to Silla by a Silla monk or a student who studied in China, before the sutra was enshrined in the Seokgatap Pagoda. An analysis of the relic revealed, however, that its paper was made by materials and technique of Silla and that the scripts are closely related to those used for the text on the gilt-bronze sarira reliquary enshrined in the pagoda of Hwangboksa Temple. Historians now conclude that the *Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light* was printed on paper made in Silla before 742 by using the woodblocks also carved in Silla, based on the scripts developed by Silla artisans. They also agree that is the oldest extant example of woodblock printing.

# 8 Everyday Life and Culture

## Clothes

### Attire-related artifacts

Among the relics displaying attire dating back to this period are twenty-eight colored figurines unearthed from a stone-chamber tomb in Yonggang-dong, Gyeongju <Fig 168-1 & 2>. This tomb is thought to date from the end of the seventh to the early eighth Century. The figurines vividly show what the attire of the Tang Dynasty of China, which was introduced to the Silla Dynasty, was like between 514 and 654. Female figurines clearly show that Silla adopted the attire system of Tang in the early days between 654 as 780 as shown by records. The size of the figurines and the attire worn by them clearly show the difference in people's classes. The largest one of the figurines wears a headgear larger than others and a purple-colored robe with wide sleeves. His robe is long enough to cover his feet and is adorned with a decorative strip, showing that he belonged to the jingol nobility.

Most of the colors of the robes worn by the figurines are now gone, with the exception of the largest one. Their classes are presumed to have been marked in different colors of the robes, i.e. purple, deep red, blue, and yellow, according to the dress code of the period. Female figurines wear attires that were in fashion during the Tang Dynasty. Their hairstyles also follow those of Tang, unlike the Korean conventional styles found






Fig 168 Figurines excavated from the stone chamber tomb of Yonggang-dong, Gyeongju

in figurines unearthed from a stone-chamber tomb in Hwangseong-dong, Gyeongju, or that date back to the Maripgan Period.

There are also Tang-style belt accessories composed of buckle, tip, rectangular loop, and loops with a round side and a straight side. Those unearthed from China tell us that belt accessories were produced by the time the Tang Dynasty was founded in 618. Thus, we can see that they were introduced to Silla around the mid-seventh century. The one unearthed from Tomb No. 1, Janggun-ro, Gyeongju, displays a Tang style with a golden tongue.

### King Heungdeok's attire-related instructions

There is a record on attire of the Unified Silla Period (668-935). The section about colored attire in *Samguk sagi* contains the fact that, in 834 (ninth year of King Heungdeok's reign), the King issued an instruction to refrain from an extravagant way of living, citing people who lusted after rare foreign-made goods as well as the collapse of the hierarchical system. The instruction set the types of attires that could be worn by different classes of people ranging from the nobility to commoners. It also set the types of wagons, harnesses, bowls, houses, and household goods that could be used

Fig 169 Bronze belt fittings with gold rivets from tomb No. 1, Janggun-ro, Gyeongju

by different classes of people and put restrictions on the use of imported goods. It shows how much people were drawn to such items.

Let us look at some details of the instruction. A member of the jingol nobility serving as an incumbent could wear a headgear made of any material but not outer clothes including trousers made of fur-embroidered satin fabric. Fur-embroidered satin fabric was regarded as the most precious fabric in Silla.

Waist belt and leather shoes along with a headgear, were regarded as the most important parts of an official robe. A member of the jingol nobility serving as an incumbent was not allowed to use white jade with carved patterns as an accessory to his waist belt or to wear purple-colored leather shoes. He could not use white jade with subdued patterns in shoestrings. As for *beoseon* (traditional Korean socks), he could wear socks made of any type of fabric, except those made of patterned silk fabric. There were no particular restrictions regarding the low shoes on the materials used to make them. The king's instruction included the density of woven fabric (e.g., up to twenty-six warps and wefts in a given width of fabric for a member of the jingol nobility serving as an incumbent).

Similar restrictions applied to female members of the jingol nobility, but there were factors associated only with items for women such as underclothes, scarves, combs, *binyeo* (traditional Korean hairpin), and headgear. They were not allowed to use combs adorned with emerald produced in present- day Tashkent or those made with the skin of tropical sea tortoises.

The following is about what should be observed by members of the jingol nobility. The following deal with the restrictions imposed on Grade-6 through Grade-4 members of the nobility and commoners:

As for headgear, those belonging to this category could only wear headgear made of specific fabric: very thinly woven, patterned silk, plain silk, thin/sparsely woven silk, and hemp cloth for Grade-6 members; patterned silk, plain silk, coarsely woven silk, thin/sparsely woven silk, and hemp cloth for Grade-5 members; coarsely woven silk, plain silk, and thin/sparsely woven silk for Grade-4 members, and; thin/sparsely woven silk and hemp cloth for commoners.

With regard to waist belt accessories, Grade-6 members of the nobility were allowed to use accessories made of rhino horn, brass, bronze, and iron, Grade-5 members, iron, and Grade-4 members, iron and bronze.

Concerning shoes, Grade-6 members of the nobility or lower were not allowed to wear leather shoes made of black reindeer hide or those dyed in color purple or which display wave patterns. Officials of Silla are assumed to have been crazy about said items. This shows that the jingol members of the nobility serving as incumbent could wear leather shoes made of black reindeer hide or which display wave patterns if they were not in color purple. Grade-6 members of the nobility were allowed to use shoe accessories made of rhino horn, brass, bronze, and iron, Grade-5 members, brass, bronze, and iron, and Grade-4 members, iron and bronze.

## Food and Culinary Traditions

### Grains

The development of paddy cultivation during the late phase of the Bronze Age led the early settlers on the south of the Korean Peninsula to the establishment of a full-fledged agricultural society. The foundation of the Saroguk in the following Proto-three Kingdoms Period, however, led the early farmers in the area to be more interested in the cultivation of other miscellaneous grains such as foxtail millet, broom corn millet, and Siberian millet. Historians speculate that the change was largely caused by the climate that became colder, which affected rice production. According to "The Record of the Eastern Tribes" in *Huhansu*, Jinhan, one of the three Han states on the Korean Peninsula, had fertile land favorable to the growth of the five grains. Today the "five grains" refers to rice, barley, bean, foxtail millet, and broom corn millet, but the list was a little different in the Three

Kingdoms Period. Considering a record from the "Chapter of Byeonhan" in The Records of Three Kingdoms (*Sanguo zhi,* 297), it had fertile soil, which was good for the cultivation of rice and five grains-the five grains seemed to have excluded rice at the time. For the Chinese people in the Qin and Han dynasties, the five grains were foxtail millet, broom corn millet, bean, barley, and yam, of which the first two were particularly widely cultivated.

Bean and barley were also regarded as valuable grains. According to "The Record of the Eastern Tribes" in the "Book of Wei" in The Records of Three Kingdoms, barley was regarded as so important by the early Korean farming communities that even an ancestral memorial ceremony would be postponed if it fell on the date of sowing barley. Barley had remained a major food crop for a long period since then, largely because it had a shorter growing period. It was also more drought-resistant than other crops and was harvested by June at the latest. Similarly, bean was cultivated widely and remained a staple food because it grew well without complex farming techniques and even in adverse natural conditions. The cultivation of bean and barley was of critical state concern.

An analysis of the soil at the site of a settlement formed in the fourth and fifth centuries in present-day Ga-dong of Gijang, Busan, revealed that its inhabitants cultivated and ate the grains such as wheat and broom corn millet in addition to rice, red beans, and fruits such as peach, melon, and gourd. They also gathered wild nuts and fruits such as Manchurian walnut, chestnut, and mountain berries.

It was between the fourth and sixth centuries that paddy cultivation achieved a major development in Korea. Ample evidence proves a dramatic increase in the production of farming tools after the early fourth century following the development of techniques for making iron tools. There are also historic records after the fourth century about the construction and repair of irrigation facilities for paddy cultivation to ensure a stable water supply for the rice farming. According to the inscription on the Cheongjebi Monument in Yeongcheon set up in 536, the twenty-third year of the King Beopheung's reign, a total of 7,000 workers were conscripted from 280 towns and villages to build a dike called Cheongje.

Records about paddy cultivation increased rather dramatically after the sixth century, revealing that the importance of rice had gradually overtaken that of other grains, which had been major staple crops for many centuries in the region. There is in *Samguk yusa* [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms]





an interesting episode about the Dharma Master Jinjeong, a seventh-century Silla monk, who left home for Taebaeksan Mountain to be a pupil of Great Priest Uisang (625-702). His mother emptied all the grain bags in her home to collect seven doe-each doe equaling 1.8 l of volume-of rice, and cooked it for her son to feed himself during his journey. The episode suggests that by the seventh century rice was consumed fairly widely among ordinary people in Silla although they had to wait until the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) to see rice growing into a major staple crop consumed by ordinary people on a daily basis.

**Side dishes served with cooked rice or other staple food**

The basic table setting for a meal in Silla probably consisted of the main carbohydrate called bap, or cooked rice, or other major cereal grains, and a range of side dishes called banchan. One may wonder sometimes if the side dishes included a dish comparable to present-day soup (*guk*) or stew (*jjigae*). There is in Brush Plowings in Gardens of Cinnamon (Gyewonpilgyeong) written by a great Silla scholar Choe Chi-won (857-?) an interesting passage: "It would be difficult to have a harmony in the taste of a soup as I only eat rice in vain." In this passage, the author compared a chief minister equipped with the capability to rule the world with a soup by using a term, *hwagaeng*, or a soup with harmonious combination of flavors. One may argue that, considering that the essay mentioning the soup was written when Choe Chi-won was staying in Tang, it cannot provide definitive evidence that soup was an essential part of daily meals among Silla people. More plausible evidence for the daily consumption of the liquid food among the people in Silla are the spoons discovered at Silla sites.

Fig 170 Bronze spoon excavated from Wolji

Experts think that the use of a spoon in eating is one of the most conspicuous features characterizing the food traditions maintaining in Korea. They argue that Korea is one of a few countries in the world where people maintain the tradition of using spoon as the primary, if not the only, utensil for eating. A spoon is used to transfer food from vessel to mouth and particularly useful in eating liquid or semi-liquid foods, such as soup or stew. Therefore, the discovery of a spoon at an archaeological site can be easily led to a conclusion that the community that used it ate liquid food as an important part of their daily meal. The oldest spoon discovered in Korea so far is one made of bone and used by a Bronze Age settler. Archaeologists agree that the use of spoon is related to the consumption of soft food such as porridge made by boiling grains with vegetables. Korean people settled on the southern part of the Korean Peninsula seemed to favor hot, watery food, which required a spoon, rather than hands or other utensils such as chopsticks, to be consumed. The wooden spoons from the Three Kingdoms Period, such as the one discovered at the archaeological site of Seongsansanseong Fortress in Haman, suggest that a meal consisted of the primary carbohydrate of cooked grains and side dishes, including a soup or stew for which the implement was used.

What kind of side dishes were served daily in Silla? According to a record in *Samguk yusa*, Lord Geodeuk, King Munmu's (r. 661-681) stepbrother, arrived at a province called Mujinju during his nationwide inspection tour and received a warm welcome from a local leader named An Gil. The prince later invited Lord Geodeuk to the royal capital and treated him with a feast of "fifty tastes." Experts have forwarded different interpretations on the exact nature of what constitutes "fifty tastes;" some believe that the term is a literal, quantitative expression for fifty side dishes, while others understand the term to represent dishes of five tastes displayed on five tables. Notwithstanding the divergence in explanations, the term does suggest that royals and aristocrats inhabiting the capital of Silla in the mid-seventh century relished culinary exuberance.

Meat and poultry required to enrich the dining tables were provided through both hunting and husbandry. The animals the people of Silla hunted for food included wild boar, deer, roe deer, rabbit, pheasant, and wild duck. As shown by the remains discovered in many archaeological sites across the Korean Peninsula, the people living on the peninsula hunted these animals beginning in prehistoric times. According to a record





in the biography of Gim Hu-jik in The History of the Three Kingdoms, King Jinpyeong (r. 579-632) hunted wild boars and rabbits with his falcons and hunting dogs. In game, some records suggest that pheasant was highly favored. For example, *Samguk yusa* relays that King Muyeol (r. 654-661) consumed six mal (approximately 108 liters) of wine, six mal of rice, and ten cock-pheasants per day and that King Munmu (r. 661-681) ate nine to ten pheasants on average. Moreover, records show that not only did the ruling class of Silla enjoy an abundance of food, but the general population also loved the pheasant, which provided a larger portion of the meat consumed overall. The popularity of pheasant meat in Silla society is evident in archaeological remains, including the pheasant bones discovered in a jar buried inside one of the Imdang Tombs in Gyeongsan built in the fifth and sixth centuries. Some scholars assume that the popularity of pheasant meat among Silla people in this period contributed to the creation of the proverb still used widely, "Get chicken if there's no pheasant." The equivalent in English may be the saying, "Half a loaf is better than none."

Historical records show that a stable supply of meat in this period was largely achieved by stockbreeding rather than hunting. Common animals included cows, pigs, chickens, and dogs at the time, and archaeological remains such as horse and dog bones discovered inside old tombs clearly demonstrate that these animals were bred domestically. Silla people also appear to have raised geese, domestic goats, and sheep, corroborated by an account in "Chapter of Silla" of New History of the Tang (Xin Tangshu, 1060) that there were large numbers of cows, horses, and pigs in the household of Silla's chief minister.

Records also mention lettuce and mushrooms. According to *Samguk sagi*, for example, people in Gongju sent golden mushrooms (*geumji*) and auspicious mushrooms (*seoji*) to the royal court of Silla as tributes in 704.

Apart from the tradition of using a spoon as the main eating utensil, the Korean culinary tradition is also characterized by the consumption of a wealth of vegetable dishes. Many scholars agree that the Korean practice of eating dishes made with edible wild plants harvested from nature as well as home-grown vegetables dates back to the Neolithic at the latest. They surmise that this practice stemmed from the preponderance of hills and mountains throughout the Korean peninsula.

*Samguk sagi* also includes an interesting list of foods that King Sinmun (r. 681-692) sent as wedding gifts to Kim Heum-un's daughter, a woman

he would marry. The gifts consisted of one hundred and thirty-five carts of polished rice, alcoholic beverages, vegetable oil, soy sauce, honey, soy paste, dried meat, fermented fish, and one hundred fifty carts of unhulled rice. According to the *Book of Sui* [*Suishu, 636*], there was a great discrepancy in the food and drinks prepared for marriage between the rich and the poor in Silla. It also contains a record about fermented or processed foods called *Jang*, *Si*, *Po*, and *Hae*. An eighth-century Japanese document states that there were two types of food made by fermenting soybeans: Jang, made with the malt of soybeans and other grains, and Si, made only with fermented soybeans. Scholars contend that the first was similar to present-day *doenjang* and the latter, *cheonggukjang*. They also believe that Hae resembled present-day fermented fish sauce and Po, meat jerky.

Recently, the culinary traditions of Silla have become clearer with some of the latest archaeological discoveries related to ritual food offerings. A Gyeongju National Museum archaeological team excavated the site of a water well used in the eighth and ninth centuries and found human remains and a pile of animal bones. The animal bones were of: land animals such as cats, dogs, cows, horses, wild boars, rabbits, rats, moles, and deer; birds such as sparrows, ducks, and pheasants; frogs; snakes; freshwater fish such as roach and carp, and; saltwater fish such as sharks, codfish, mullet, perch, yellow tail, bream, croaker, mackerel, skate, flatfish, and globefish. All of them were offerings to the gods and goddesses, most likely chosen because they represented a wide array of comestibles from Silla. Archaeologists also discovered from Silla tombs built between the fourth and sixth centuries pottery containing food remains: chicken and pheasant meat; shells such as snail, clam, black clam, grooved carpet shell, and abalone; fish such as shark and globefish, and; fruits and nuts such as peach, melon, and chestnut.

Alcoholic beverage was an essential part of the food offerings to divine beings during a ritual. According to "The Principal Chronicles of Silla" in *Samguk sagi*, there was a festive weaving contest held during the reign of King Yuri (r. 24-57) in which the losing team prepared food and beverages for the winners. Alcoholic beverages of Silla seemed to have an international reputation, as suggested by the Tang poems praising them. Together with the drinks, rice cakes (*tteok*) also formed a crucial part of the offerings. According to a diary, *Nitto Guho Junrei Koki Nitto Guho Junrei Koki* [Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law], written by the Japanese monk Ennin (793 or 794 – 864), members of a Silla community in Beophwawon,





a Silla Buddhist temple established in Tang China, celebrated the Autumnal Full Moon Festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month by sharing festive foods such as dough flake soup (*sujebi*) and rice cakes.

Tea also had an important position in the gastronomic heritage of Silla. People in Silla drank tea on a daily basis and, at the same time, used it as a special offering to divinities and ancestral spirits. According to *Samguk sagi*, a Silla envoy to the Tang named Daeryeom returned home with a tea tree in 828, which King Heungdeok (r. 826-836) ordered to be planted at the foot of Jirisan Mountain. Tea had already been consumed by Silla people under the reign of Queen Seondeok (r. 632-647), but it was probably in the early ninth century that tea drinking became widespread. The propagation of the tea drinking practice is closely related to the spread of Buddhism. It was during the Later Han Dynasty (22-220 CE) in China that the beneficial effect of tea began to be known and Eastern Jin (317-419 CE) that the practice spread widely together with Buddhism.

Fruits and nuts also held an important position in the food traditions of Silla. In particular, the people of Silla highly regarded peaches, plums, apricots, chestnuts, and jujubes, calling them the Five Fruits. According to "The Principal Chronicles of Silla" in *Samguk sagi*, peaches and plums had been two of the earliest fruits grown by farmers. Moreover, *Samguk yusa* contains ample records about peaches and chestnut trees. Old records also reveal that pine nuts produced in Silla were praised in China as "Sea Pine Master" and regarded as a valuable gift item. The pin nuts were exported to Japan as well for the consumption in the Japanese court, as told by a document in the Shosoin collection.

Ginseng was a special Silla product with a great reputation across the region for its special medicinal properties. According to a record in *Samguk sagi*, King Seongdeok (r. 702-737) sent an envoy to the Tang in 723 with special gifts consisting of "orchard pony (*gwahama*)," ox bezoar, ginseng, ringed seal skin, gold, and silver. The record also states that King Hyoseong (r. 737-742) granted to the Tang envoy Xingdao a gift of thirty ryang of gold, fifty pil of cotton, and one hundred geun of ginseng. Moreover, records show that Silla exported over two hundred geun of ginseng to the Tang in the year 734 alone and that the scholar Choe Chi-won (857-?) gave ginseng to his superior as a special gift when was serving as an official in the Tang court. Ginseng was one of the Silla's most valuable local products and an extremely popular export item. Scholars agree that the product was

consumed in the form of tea for health benefits.

As Silla was a striticly hierarchical society, the consumption of food was far from equal throughout the disparate social classes. Royals and aristocrats certainly enjoyed luxurious meals consisting of cooked rice and soup with assorted side dishes including cooked and fermented fish or meat prepared by their servants. Such meal was typically served with liquor or wine and involved using several tables at a time. For ordinary people, the consumption of meat or fish was most likely restricted. Their principal dish, cooked grains, was typically served with salted vegetables or soybean sauce. According to the inscription on the Stele for Master Jingam at Ssanggyesa Temple, the Unified Silla monk Jingam was a devoted filial son who sold fish to get bean porridge for his mother because he had neither one mal of grains nor a square foot of land. For his own meals, he cooked acorn and beans accompanied by a couple of crudely made vegetable dishes. Apparently, there was no significant difference in the meals he served his noble guests. It is not clear whether he insisted on the simple food as an effort to lead an austere lifestyle as a religious practitioner, but the record does offer a glimpse into the simple meals common folks had in those days.

## Dwellings and Houses of Silla

There is no record remaining to provide a comprehensive understanding of the human dwellings built and used in Silla from the start to the end of its history. The archaeological remains of the early Silla dwellings discovered at the Silla-related sites lead to widely varying interpretations depending on scholars and their interests.

According to "Records of the Eastern Tribes" in the *Book of Wei of the History of the Three Kingdoms* [*Sanguozhi*] people in the Hans, the ancient tribal states on the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, "built their dwellings with thatch and earth whose shapes are similar to a lofty tomb with the entrance made on the upper structure. Entire family lives in the same house, and there is no discrimination between old and young, and between men and women." Another record in the same book, which focuses on Byeonjin, one of the three Korean Han states, states, "They build their houses by piling up timbers horizontally, making them look like prisons." Scholars present different views on the details of these early Korean dwellings. Some





of them may be better illustrated by the house-shaped pottery from Silla in its early period ruled by leaders called Maripgan.

The word "tomb" (*chong*, or 冢) in the record above had been interpreted as referring to an underground burial, leading many scholars to believe that the dwellings in Korea around the mid-third century were largely pit dwellings. Such a view can be misleading because the word more specifically denotes a tumulus, a grave with a tall mound. The ancient Chinese history writers compared "the dwelling with thatch and earth," meaning a dwelling with a thatch roof and mud walls, to a tumulus. As briefly discussed, archaeological discoveries show that the dwellings for the Saroguk people were largely built by digging a shallow pit in the earth, or just over ground. Therefore, the passage of "the entrance made on the upper structure," previously interpreted to refer to an opening that provided access through the roof to a pit-house, more likely denotes an entrance made on the upper part of a wall of the dwelling with dwellers using ladders to get in or out. The house-shaped pottery shows that such dwellings continued to be used when Silla was ruled by Maripgans.

The house-shaped pottery vessels excavated, or presumed to have been excavated, at the old graves across the present-day Yeongnam area display almost the same structure, characterized by the thatch roof, two-story interior consisting of a room, and an attic above it, with a ladder leaning against one of its four sides. Since the vessels have rather realistic, faithful depictions of the details, it may be possible to make a miniature reproduction of the house around the period by combining them with other related archaeological discoveries.

A reproduction made on the basis of the archaeological remains features a structure consisting of the main room enclosed with load-bearing walls, an attic above it with the entrance to the house and is covered by a thatch roof. Scholars assume that the term "earthen room" in the old records referred to the room enclosed by the bearing walls without an entrance. Despite the term, however, the walls were not made only of earth, but also of wood framing and possibly with butt-and-pass corners. Scholars believe that the passage of the technique of "piling up timbers horizontally" is related to the use of such a corner system.

Each wall of the house consists of closely framed posts and studs infilled with wattle and daub, and bears the weight of the roof and ceiling resting upon it. The walls of this type were intended to make heat management as

effective as it was in the pit houses of earlier period. The house contains only one room with no partition walls, thus corresponding with the ancient record. One distinctive feature that also forms a key architectural element for the house is the hypocaust system with a single flue laid along one wall to transport heat and smoke from the fireplace to the chimney <Fig 171>. This system designed for both heating and cooking is known to have appeared during the early Iron Age.

The house is also characterized by the roof with one end featuring the structure of a hipped roof, while the other features the structure of a

Fig 171 Earthenware in the shape of a house of the Maripgan Period





gable roof with overhang. The construction is believed to have developed from the pit houses of the prehistoric times, which had hip roof and low entrance. The bearing walls evolved from the wall studs of the Bronze Age pit dwellings. The entrance is on the upper part of the gable wall and designed to allow access to the attic through a ladder.

The unique double-floor structure with an entrance hung high on the wall largely relied on the use of purlins supported by four posts and tall king posts that help create a large space for the attic with the main entrance to the house. Scholars believe that the space of the upper floor was used as a workshop or storage for food and other household items.

The two-storey structure with the entrance providing access to the second floor was most likely seems to have been intended to protect the house, and the dwellers in it, from dangerous animals. Historians also believe that the particular structure resulted from the effort to cope with the water level of the rivers; the level had risen following the sea level rise that occurred around the beginning of the Common Era when settlements began to appear on the alluvial plains in the area. One problem with this viewpoint is that there had also been houses in the settlement of Gadong in Gijang with the entrance on the opposite side of the hearth.

The archaeological remains at the site of Ga-dong Village in Gijang provide a fine example of the settlements of Silla between the fourth and

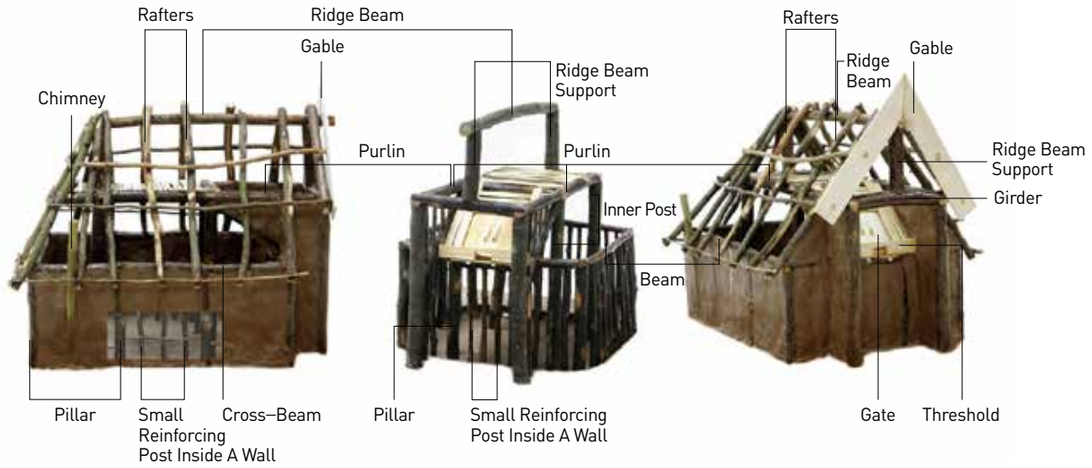



Fig 172 Names of the structure and parts of houses

sixth centuries. The village was formed at a basin enclosed by mountains where villagers enjoyed ample supply of firewood from the trees-chestnut and elm in particular-growing in the mountains, and actively cultivated rice and other crops at the fertile land surrounding the river flowing through the village. Moreover, It is also highly probable that the river most likely served as a trading route linking the village with other communities in the area through the East Sea into which it flowed.

Archaeologists found that the Gadong Village site consisted of two sections clearly divided from each other. The first featured a concentration of 30 to 40 above-ground dwellings with rounded square ground plans, and the second contained a group of storages characterized by structures raised on stilts. Archaeologists also found at the site vestiges of pottery kiln and water well. The first section is assumed to have contained about 30 to 40 dwellings. Regarding the complex of structures raised on stilts, historians hypothesize that they were used to store grains and other items produced or collected by the villagers. Some even argue, based on from the large number of storage spaces that the village had been a regional logistics hub of early Silla where the elevated buildings were used to store tributary taxes collected in the area.

The use of ceramic roof tiles began to be used in the sixth century in Silla and continued for and that they had been used for quite a long while for significant religious and political buildings such as Buddhist temples and royal palaces. A record in "Chapter of Jinhan" of *Samguk sagi* states, however, that there was here was in the royal capital of Silla not even a single thatched-roof house in the Silla royal capital during the reign of King Heongang (r. 875-886). It also states that each tile-roofed house had its eaves and walls joined to those of other houses. Such observations suggest that the use of ceramic roof tiles had become widespread in the capital by the time of the unification of the three kingdoms three early Korean kingdoms by Silla in the mid-seventh century.

The issuance of a prohibitive law during the reign of King Heungdeok (r. 826-836) recorded in *Samguk sagi* provides an important clue to some significant cultural aspects that characterized Silla society until the early ninth century. The law imposed restrictions upon some details of the dwelling houses in Silla according to the owners' social status, ranging from the True-bone Class (*Jingol*) to the Fifth (*Odupum*) and the Sixth (*Yukdupum*) clasese. The less severe for the houses of Jingol, the highest social class in





the kingdom, but more tightened for those of lower classes. Details of the prohibitions stipulated in the sumptuary law provide important information about a great variety of aspects of the homes resided by Silla aristocrats.

As for the residence of aristocractic (*i.e. Jingol*) families, for example, the law banned any building larger than 24 feet in both length and width, the use of eave-end tiles and hanging fish (*hyeoneo*) pendants used to decorate gables although allowed the decorative grid ceilings, middle purlins (*jungbo*), decorative column capitals (*gonga*) and roof charms (*jukgae*) in the shape of animal head. The law allowed decorations with pewter and copper but not with gold, silver, brass or five-color pattern (*ochae*), allowed the middle or "double stairs" but not the triple stairs, renewal of original stone steps, roofed walls with ridge beam and purlins, or plastering. It also allowed a blind hemmed with coarsely woven silk (*gyeon* or *si*), silk mattress, or bed decorated with red sandalwood, agarwood or boxwood, but banned a blind hemmed with embroidery (geum or gyesu) or wild grass silk (yachora), embroidered folding screen, or bed decorated with hawksbill sea turtle shell. As for the doors, the law allowed using the double sets of doors and the four-direction doors (*sabangmun*).

While there are some ancient historical texts providing details of the tile-roofed houses of Unified Silla, it had not been easy for historians to have a more reliable comprehensive picture of the houses until the discovery of a cremation urn container in the shape of a tile-roofed house <Fig 175>. The container shows a fine example of the early house with hipped-and- gabled roof that appeared in Silla.

Few archaeological evidences have been found to give detailed information on the dwelling houses of Unified Silla. One rare, and important, discovery was made recently at the Hwangnyongsa Temple site (S1E1 Section of the Silla Capital site), which illustrates the layout of dwelling houses in the city divide into districts (bang) by numerous cross streets arranged in a grid like pattern. The discovery shows that each district was 172.5 by 167.5 m in size and contained five to eight houses enclosed with walls and water well accommodating 18 households. Of the existing remains, those preserved with the features of walls and buildings are largely in the south and west of the site. Excavation of the site also revealed that the building site on the southern part of the district is approximately 30 m from south to north and 20 m from east to west while that on the western part is about 30 m from east to west and 20 m from south to north.

Fig 173 Oven feature and entrance of house feature excavated at the Gadong settlement site in Gijang, Busan

Fig 174 Restored house model of the Saro-guk and Maripgan periods

Fig 175 House-shaped outer container of a cremation urn corresponding to tile-roofed dwellings of the Unified Silla period

The Household No. 2 of the S1E2 Site illustrated in Figs 177 and 178, for instance, features a rectangular layout, which is 704 $m^2$ in area, containing eight buildings with tiled roofs except for the one on the middle of the southern wall which is assumed to have been the main entrance of the





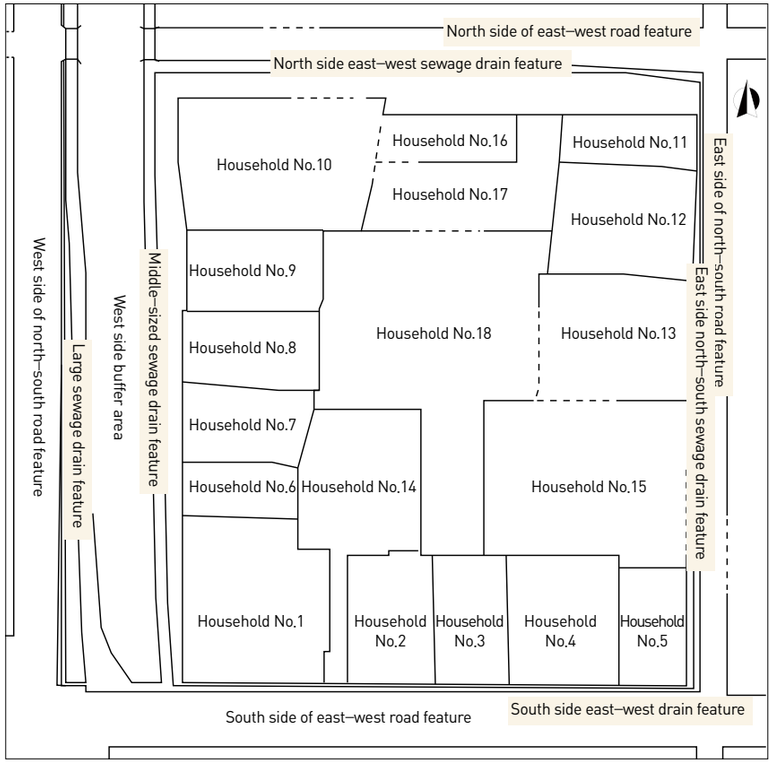



Fig 176 Feature distribution at the S1E1 section of the Silla Capital site, Gyeongju

district. There was on the opposite side the district's largest building (37.45 $m^2$) facing south with the Building 1 in the front. The rest six buildings are arranged along the walls, three along the east wall facing west and the other three along the west wall facing east. Considering the size and location, the Building 5 is assumed to have been the central building of the section. Archaeologists unearthed a shard of a large storage jar at the site of the Building 7, which they believe is an evidence to show that the building was used as a storehouse. The capital city of early Silla had no centrally controlled water supply system and therefore each household had its own well to get drinking water. Sometimes one household had more than one well some of which were used for religious purposes.

As for the dwelling houses of early Silla in the regions outside the royal capital, the remains at the site of Bongnyong-dong in Sangju, which had

Fig 177 Pillar foundations of Household No. 2 of S1E1 site, Gyeongju

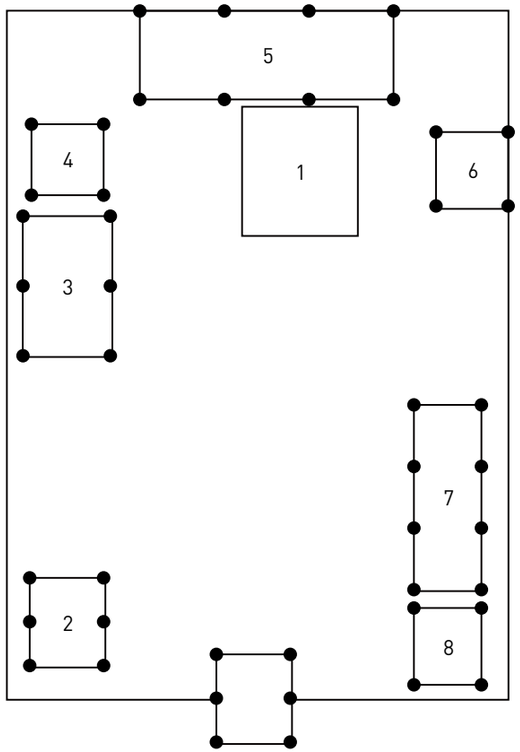



Fig 178 Layout of features of Household No. 2, S1E1 site, Gyeongju

been part of the Silla's sub-province called Sabeolju, provide important clues. The remaining features of these buildings are elongated along the east-west axis facing south and along the south-north axis facing east, corresponding to the layout of the entire section of the settlement. Each rubble column foundation is about 1 meter in diameter and 30 cm in depth while the entire structure of each building was about 10 m long and consisted of one to three bays <Fig 179>. As for the one- to two- bay structures, historians believe that they were public buildings because they had wider bays than ordinary residential buildings and were arranged to form a complex in a symmetrical layout. This complex of public buildings was flanked by three-bay structures arranged in an L-shaped, parallel or U-shaped layout. The remains suggesting the existence of yards make





Fig 179 Pillar foundations of House No. 256, Bongnyong-dong, Sangju

Fig 180 Typical dwelling at House No. 230-3, Bongnyong-dong, Sangju

Fig 181 Well feature at House No. 256 Bongnyong-dong, Sangju

experts believe that these buildings had been ordinary dwelling houses.

Ordinary homes of early Silla were characterized by a pit made by partly dug into the ground in a square, rectangular or oval shape in plan form, containing a hearth used for cooking and heating which was equipped with a hypocaust system with a single flue <Fig 180>. The hearth was made with clay, stone and ceramic tiles and had a fire hole on which the cooking pot was placed. It had almost the same features with the hearths made during the earlier Maripgan period except for that the flue was built with stones, which retain heat longer than earth, for instance.

The water wells discovered at the site are all lined with stones and only the subterranean structures are remaining. Most of the stone linings are either circular or square in plan form and either cylindrical in cross section or truncated cone featuring the upper section flaring out wider than the lower section. There is on the bottom, leveled sand gravel layer, a simple frame made of timbers in the shape of the Chinese character (井) meaning "well". The side walls were made by piling up large stones for the lower part and smaller ones for the upper part to ensure structural stability and balance <Fig 181>.





# 9 Agriculture and Production of Goods

## Agriculture

In the history of agriculture in Korea, Unified Silla is the period in which traditional agricultural techniques reached practical completion. It was in about the sixth century that Silla started to build reservoirs, enlarge farming fields and supply iron farming tools, such as plow, for the farming communities across the country. The movement continued in the following Unified Silla period only with greater speed. Archaeologists tend to excavate early iron farming tools at the tombs of the Three Kingdoms Period but the tools used in the following Unified Silla period more at the sites, rather than tombs, related with royal households or other state institutions. Characteristic features gathered from the agricultural implements discovered at the Unified Silla sites include widespread use of moldboard plows, production of large cast iron hoe, and the introduction of tanged weeding hoe.

The iron agricultural implements used during the Unified Silla period include plow with moldboard, U-shaped iron blade, double-blade weeder (*ttabi*), rake (*soeseurang*), paddy ditch digger (*salpo*), weeding hoe (*homi*) and sickle of which the most distinguished item is the moldboard plow. Archaeological discoveries show that plows were used during the Three Kingdoms Period but it was during the following Unified Silla Period that soil to one side. The development of the moldboard plow enabled deep

plowing, which led to more fertile soil, sequential cropping, and crop rotation. The plows made in this period and excavated at the Guui-dong Site in Seoul share a remarkably similar shape, which seems to have been influenced from the Goguryeo style plows featuring a triangular shape.

The agricultural implements of the period excavated so far suggest that paddy agriculture had been developed significantly than the previous period although the development did not necessarily mean increased productivity that was greatly affected by natural disasters. According to historical records, Unified Silla suffered greatly due to natural disasters that struck the kingdom almost every spring, March to May. The rulers of Unified Silla tried various efforts to get over the difficulties including repair and improvement of irrigation facilities. Such efforts devoted to the construction and management of the irrigation facilities and the control of water flows in its rivers resulted in a gradual increase of arable land. Records reveal that reconstruction and repair of reservoir banks were particularly active in the eighth and ninth centuries. As for the Cheongje Reservoir in Yeongcheon, the inscriptions on

Fig 182 Plough blades excavated from Eonnam-ri, Yongin





the stele set up to commemorate its construction shows that the reservoir was made in the sixth or seventh century and underwent a major repair in the late eighth century. The inscription also contains a record about a facility called Sangbaegulli which experts believe was related with the control of water supply from the reservoir to the farm fields.

Agricultural products collected by Unified Silla as tax were largely foxtail millet, rice, and soybean. The officials' salaries were paid in rice while the main source for the relief of suffering people was millet. The wet rice cultivation continued to develop in the period but a much larger part of the agricultural production of Unified Silla was dependent upon dry land farming. That explains why the kingdom always suffered a lack of rice and its people relied on millet or soybean for their subsistence.

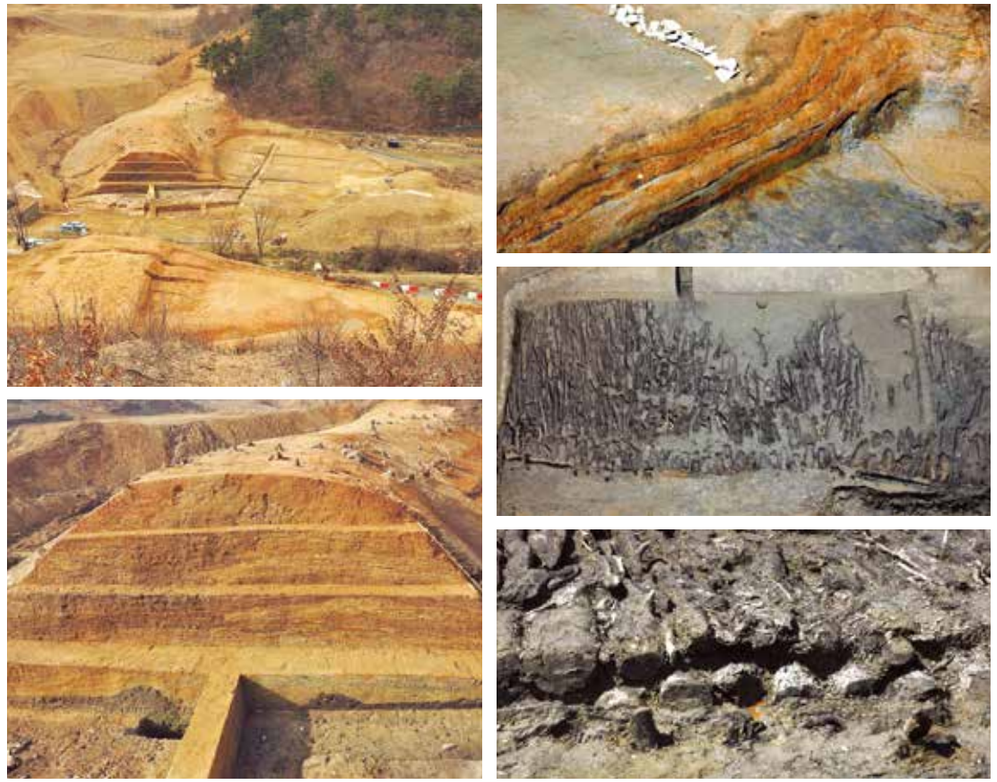


Fig 183 Various excavated water control–related features (left: levee feature at Yaksa-ri, Ulsan; right: levee features at Gonggeomji, Sangju)

## Goods Production Sites

One notable feature regarding the development of pottery in Korea from the Three Kingdoms Period to the Goryeo Period is that the structure of its pottery kiln continued to develop in the direction of increasing productivity.

One example can be found at the stepped floor of the kilns of Unified Silla discovered at the archaeological sites in Mulcheon-ri of Gyeongju, Daeseong-ri of Gimcheon, and the Dongbaek District of Yongin. Experts believe that the structure was intended to help the vessels stacked on the floor maintain stability during the firing process. The benefit of this structure is largely dependent upon the firebox built by piling up stones after the fifth century as it is designed to help avoid damaging the kiln's main structure during the process of rebuilding the entrance and firebox whenever the kiln is operated. The changes occurred in relation with the structure of kilns and the development of kiln equipment is related with the diversity in the production of pottery. Archaeologists discovered a variety of refractory stilts at the archaeological site of Songok-dong in Gyeongju, suggesting that the Unified Silla potters produced high-quality ceramic works.

In Silla, ceramic roof tiles began to be used during the sixth century and mass produced after the unification of the three early Korean kingdoms as demands increased due to construction of large government buildings and luxurious houses of wealthy families. Roof tile kilns of Unified Silla have been discovered all across Korea, including in the archaeological sites in Hagu-ri, Geumjang-ri, Songok-dong and Mangseong-ri in Gyeongju,

Fig 184 Pottery production features and potteries excavated from Hwagok-ri, Gyeongju





Fig 185 Decorated tiles excavated from Hwagok-ri, Gyeongju

Fig 186 Mold excavated from Dongcheon-dong, Gyeongju

Fig 187 Wooden slips excavated from House No. 376, Hwangnam-dong, Gyeongju

Cheonbang in Boryeong, Mireuksa Temple Site in Iksan, Bonui-ri in Cheongyang, Cheong-ri in Sangju, Jeongha-dong in Andong, and Gok-ri in Ulsan. All these tile kilns were buried half underground and have no definite traces to show changes occurred in relation with productivity probably because their demand had been basically limited despite changes in the society.

Another characteristic element related with the ceramic traditions in Unified Silla is that, as shown by the site of Hwagok-ri in Gyeongju, kilns were used for the production of both roof tiles and pottery. Archaeologists found at the Geumjangni Site in Gyeongju, a large archaeological site formed after the eighth century, piles of rooftile shards and potsherds in the kiln. They also found tile shards and potsherds of Unified Silla in and around the kiln of the Mireuksa Temple Site.

Archaeologists found that the royal capital of Unified Kingdom had in its suburbs settlements of artisans who produced goods demanded by the city inhabitants such as pottery and rooftile. They discovered at the sites archaeological features of kilns, which had been operated either consistently or intermittently since the Maripgan period. For example, experts conjecture that the workshops existed in Songok-ri and Mulcheon-ri in the northeastern border of Gyeongju and Mangseong-ri in the southwest produced articles to meet the needs of the inhabitants of the capital. The production-consumption system established during the Unified Silla had become the material base for Gyeongju to function as the capital of a kingdom.

Only a very few archaeological sites have been found in relation with the production of metal artifacts during the Unified Silla period, which include those in Dongcheon-dong and Hwangnam-dong. As for the site in Dongcheon-dong located north of the Bukcheon Stream, archaeologists discovered features of large buildings and workshops used for the production of bronze artifacts. Excavation of the site revealed that two of the three bays divided by stone lines were used as a workshop where they found a rectangular kiln 3 meters in diameter containing a pile of red brown molds, suggesting that the workshop was used to produce molds. Archaeologists discovered at the site four bronze melting furnaces and one smelting furnace of Unified Silla and a glass mold.

Excavation of the Hwangnamdong 376 Site led to the discovery of the features of storage pits, water well, buildings with stone-stacked cores, wooden column sequences, palisade and stone piles. The findings suggest





that the site had contained a storehouse managed by the government or a building used to store sacrificial offerings. The discovery of a Chinese character gyeong(椋), which was used to refer to a storage, written on a wooden strip unearthed at the site is also regarded as an evidence to show that the building once standing at the site had been used as a storage maintained by the government. An analysis of the glass slag and glass melting crucible discovered at the site revealed that the glass produced at the site was of lead glass. Findings at the site include a stone weight which experts believe had been used to measure the weight of grains kept at the storage.

## Artifacts

Pottery of Unified Silla can be divided into two phases. The first phase of the Unified Silla pottery, ranging from the late seventh century and late eighth century, is the widespread use of impressed floral designs. The pottery decorated with impressed designs appeared in the earlier period, but the decorative motif was simple and used only for a specific area of the surface. In the early phase of the Unified Silla period, however, potters developed the technique further and used extensively, making vessels stamped with multiple motifs combined together to cover almost the entire surface. Experts are generally agreed that the pottery with stamped floral motifs reached its zenith in the eighth century.

Pottery vessels made in this period are largely lidded bowls with flaring mouth and footed bottles. In Unified Silla of this period cremation had become a dominant form of funeral and accordingly potters produced funerary urns luxuriously decorated with impressed motifs. One of the most famous archaeological sites representing the kingdom in this period is Wolji, a small artificial lake completed in 676 at the garden of a Silla palace, where archaeologists excavated a large number of pottery vessels used by the ruling class of the kingdom.

In the second phase, ranging from the early ninth to the tenth century, pottery vessels with impressed designs decreased rather dramatically and were replaced by vessels with plain surface. The technique was now used for a few small bottles bearing pleated design created by attaching thin clay bands or impressing solid or dotted lines vertically.

Fig 188 Stamped-design pottery excavated from Wolji

Unified Silla potters in this latter phase preferred bottles decorated with pleated design or in a rectangular body and large jars engraved with wave design encircling the neck. The rectangular bottles are generally believed to have been conceived from the necessity to carry more, than the bottles with globular body, in a limited space of a cart.

Pottery vessels of Unified Silla in the second phase are excavated at the sites not only in its capital, such as Wolji and Hwangnyongsa Temple sites, but also in the regional areas, such as Jinjuk-ri of Boryeong, Bangsan-dong of Siheung, and Gurim-ri of Yeongam. Other sites where the vessels of this period are discovered include several historic fortress sites, such as Cheonghaejin, which were built across the kingdom as the conflict grew fierce between the Three Later Kingdoms in the early tenth century.

It was also during this period celadon vessels of Yue Ware were imported from China as shown by a celadon bowl discovered at the Wolji site. Archaeological evidences show that Silla potters were able to produce pottery vessels coated with green glaze in the seventh century and have the





Fig 189 Various roof-tiles excavated from Gyeongju

Fig 190 Buddhist floral design (with the 2nd year of Joro inscription) excavated from Wolji

Fig 191 Close-up of the inscription 2nd year of Joro on the side of the tile

technique of baking them at high temperatures. By the mid-ninth century they were offered ample opportunities to get access to, and learn from, the Chinese pottery, contributing to preparing a condition for the creation of porcelain ware on Korean soil. That is why some believe it probable that Unified Silla potters were able to make porcelain ware although the generally accepted view is that it was during the Goryeo period (918-1392) that Korea produced its own porcelain ware.

There occurred significant changes on the Korean ceramic roof tiles in the seventh century. The changes include the appearance of the plate eave- end tile (*ammaksae*), and multiple-petal lotus design ornamenting the tubular eave-end tile (*sumaksae*) where the lotus flower contains a seedpod at the center and beads along the edge. The design decorating the tubular eave-end tile became more intricate and luxurious than those of the earlier period where the lotus petals are arranged in a single layer. There were also many other motifs used to decorate eave-end tiles in this period such as twin birds, Chinese unicorn (*girin*), lion, *Kalavinka*, Mandala flower, vine, and grapes. The designs of the eave-end tile came to lose much of its exuberance and diversity after the ninth century, leaving only a simple chrysanthemum motif with long thin petals.

Historians conjecture that the early tubular roof tiles (*sugiwa*) in Silla were made by building up clay coils in the same way as coiling in pottery, but gradually the technique was replaced by using tubular molds. Similarly, most of the tubular roof tiles made in Unified Silla had ledges whereas those of the Three Kingdoms Period generally had not. As for the plate roof tiles (*amgiwa*), early tile makers used the "tile barrel" (*watong*), a blind-like device made by weaving bamboo strips, which was gradually replaced by a cylindrical frame. The tile making also involved using "paddling boards" which were divided into three types according to the length, short (10 cm), middle (12-17 cm) and long board (over 17 cm). Scholars speculate that the early tiles were made with short boards and that it was after Silla unified the three early Korean kingdoms in the mid-seventh century that its makers moved from short to middle-length boards according to the development of techniques.

Silla builders also used tiles to cover walls or floors of their buildings. The tiles were largely divided into two categories according to whether they were plain or ornamental. Some of the tiles made during the Unified Silla Period, those used for Buddhist temples in particular, were lavishly





decorated with various Buddhist motifs and even coated with green glaze as shown by those discovered at the sites of Hwangnyongsa, Sacheonwangsa, Gameunsa, and Heungnyunsa Temples. Of the decorative tiles produced in this period, one excavated at the Wolji Site in Gyeongju is particularly highly regarded for its intricate and beautifully rendered Mandala flower motif. The design ornamenting the upper surface consists of a large Mandala flower with eight petals located at the center and scrollwork on all four corners while the sides have a pair of deer facing each other and a lot of vine scrolls around them. There is on one side an inscription, "Made on the third day of the third month in the Second Joro Year [i.e. 680] by Gunyak from Hanjibeol-bu currently serving in the position of Sosa," providing valuable information about the construction date for the buildings around Wolji, procurement of building materials by the six Ministries, and some government posts of Unified Silla.

The tiles of Unified Silla were also decorated with the motifs of pavilion gate, dragon, hunting scene, Buddha, and pagoda. Such designs were applied to the sides, suggesting that they were used not for the floor but for walls of a temple or pagoda. Of the tiles of this type, the green-glazed tiles with molded images of Buddhist divinities excavated at the Sacheonwangsa Temple site are particularly highly appreciated. Known to have been made to decorate the surface of a pagoda, the tiles were discovered in fragments during a railroad construction work which took place during the Period of Japanese Colonial Rule (1910-1945) and sent to the National Museum of Korea. A more comprehensive picture of the decorative tiles revealed through the re- excavation of the temple site, which began in 2006. We now know that the tiles with Buddhist divinities, formerly believed to have represented the Four Heavenly Kings (Sacheonwang), were used to decorate the base of the two pagodas of Sacheonwangsa Temple, placing a unit of three figures on each side of the stairs built at the center of each of the base's four sides. The figures, appearing as heroic warriors sitting on evil monsters they subjugated, are represented in a remarkably realistic depiction, highlighting individuality in their posture, costume and eyes. While there is a controversy over their creator 龍 many believed as works by Yangji, a great monk artist of Unified Silla, the molded images of the tiles are widely regarded as some of the greatest masterpieces of Unified Silla remaining today.

Archaeologists tend to find at the sites of Unified Silla rather farming

Fig 192 Horse bit excavated from Wolji

Fig 193 Stirrups excavated from the Hwawangsanseong Fortress, Changnyeong





tools or other household implements than weapons. They now know that even the tombs of Unified Silla produce no significant historical objects. Archaeologists excavated at a pit in Eonnam-ri of Yongin 15 plows, 10 moldboards and other iron household objects such as pot, padlock and bit which suggest that the site might have been either a workshop or storage. They also discovered iron implements, such as plow and ladle, at the site of Dongcheon-dong, Gyeongju.

Bits and stirrups are two important items representing the saddlery of Unified Silla. Most of the bits excavated so far are marked by the use of the S-shaped "rod cheekpiece" with double rings made with iron or bronze, sometimes gilded. The rein connectors had two types, double-twisted connector which had been used since the Three Kingdoms Period and ring connector which was widely used in Tang. Representative examples of bits used in Unified Silla have been discovered at the sites in Tap-ri of Gyeongju, Hwawangsanseong Fortress in Changnyeong, Marosanseong Fortress in Gwangyang, Busosanseong Fortress in Buyeo, Mireuksa Temple Site in Buyeo, and Eonnam-ri of Yongin.

As for stirrups used by Unified Silla riders, a larger part of the discoveries made so far are "jar stirrups" characterized by the shape of a jar designed to cover the front part of the rider's foot. The stirrups of this type had been used during the Three Kingdoms Period, but unlike the early items which were made of wood with important parts covered with iron plate, the Unified Silla items had their entire structure made of iron. There had also been a significant progress in their function with new features designed for easier connection between the saddle and stirrups and easier foot entry. Fine examples of Unified Silla stirrups were found at the Cheongwansa Temple site in Gyeongju, Imdang Wetland Site 1 in Gyeongsan, Hwawangsanseong Fortress in Changnyeong, Marosanseong Fortress in Gwangyang, Mireuksa Temple site in Iksan, and Pyeongsan in Hwanghae-do.

10

# Trade and Exchange

## Trade Ports

Unified Silla maintained active diplomatic relations with its neighboring states, trading with them briskly. The dynamic international relationship created huge cultural and material wealth in the royal capital of the kingdom, and brought cosmopolitan elements to Silla cultures. The luxurious lifestyle maintained by people in Gyeongju during the Unified Silla Period, which eventually led King Heungdeok (r. 826-836) to issue a sumptuary law as recorded in *Samguksagi* was greatly indebted to the prosperity brought by the brisk exchange activities. While much of the records about the wealth of Silla made by ancient historical texts and foreign travelers yet to be verified by archaeological evidences, some rare cultural imports, such as porcelain from Tang, discovered in the royal capital of Unified Silla, sites of major Buddhist temples across its region, and trading ports once bustled with international merchants provide valuable clues of the prosperity the kingdom relished.

The archaeological site of Cheonghaejin in Jangdo Island contains evidences to show that the island was used by Jang Bo-go (?-846) as a hub of interregional trading in East Asia during the ninth century. Jang Bo-go crossed the sea to China when young and served the Tang Dynasty as a military official until he returned home in 828 where he advised King Heungdeok





Fig 194 View of excavations at the Cheonghaejin site

Fig 195 Artifacts excavated from the Cheonghaejin site

to settle the financial difficulties troubling the Silla court by driving out pirates and promoting interregional trade. The king appointed him as Great Commissioner (Daesa) of Cheonghaejin and allowed him to command a 10,000-strong army at the naval base in Cheonghae (present-day Wando). Chonghaejin was located at a strategic point off the southwestern part of the Korean Peninsula effectively linking the three Northeast Asian states, China,

Fig 196 Palisade postmold line, Bangu-dong site, Ulsan

Japan and Korea, through sea routes. Significantly, it was also located on the route Japanese merchant ships used for their trading with Tang.

Recent excavation revealed the site of the headquarters of Cheonghaejin at Jangdo Island and that of Beophwasa Temple on the foot of Sanghwangsan Mountain. Jangdo is a tiny island (approx. 132,000 m²) 180 m off the village of Jangjwa-ri where Jang Bo-go had the headquarters of his naval force. Archaeologists discovered at the island lined postholes used for the palisade wall and remains of inner and outer fortress walls. The palisade wall built for the defense of the southern and northwestern coasts of Jangdo consisted of about 1,000 palisades situated in the water 10 m away from the coast with the gaps between palisades from 40 to 80 cm. Artifacts excavated at the site include flattened bottles, small bottle with pleated motif, *Yue* ware shard, eave-end tiles, and earthenware vessels. The discoveries have similarities with those excavated at other Unified Silla sites including the Mireuksa Temple Site in Iksan, Jinjungni Kiln Site in Boryeong, and Cheonbu-dong Tombs on Ulleungdo Island. Archaeologists also found at the site a storage pit containing sacrificial vessels such as iron plate, iron pot and bronze bottle, and others suggesting that the site was an administrative and military hub of Unified Silla such as bronze weights, arrowhead, knives and swords, iron belt, and saddlery.

Experts believe that the Bangu-dong Site in Ulsan is related with a trading port of Unified Silla directly operated by the court. They discovered at the site features of a building of the Three Kingdoms Period. Of the discoveries historians are particularly interested in the remains of the palisade wall, 250 m in total length, double lined with the gap between the two 4 meters. Archaeologists also found at the site four watchtower features, three in the Section 1 and one in the Section 4. The remaining wooden columns used to support the watchtowers are about 45 to 70 cm in diameter and about 130 cm in length and the stakes of the palisade were driven into the ground after digging postholes about 1 m deep. In archaeology, the palisade is generally regarded as a temporary defensive measure compared to earthen or stone walls, but the remains of the Bangu-dong Site, sturdily built to enclose a hilly area, suggest that the structure had been used for a long period. There are remarkable similarities between the remains in Bangu-dong and Cheonghaejin, which lead scholars to a conclusion that the defensive wall in the latter was intended to be used for the long-term.

## Discovery of Overseas Cultural Items

There have been a variety of artifacts excavated to show the cultural exchange between Unified Silla and its neighboring states. These artifacts reflect the tendency of cultural exchange in Northeast Asia between the seventh and ninth century where cultures flew from Tang to Silla and then to Japan. In other words, archaeologists often find Tang artifacts at Unified Silla sites and Silla artifacts kept in Japan.

Archaeologists in Japan have excavated in many archaeological sites across the country pottery with stamped designs made by Silla potters after the Three Kingdoms Period. The excavations include those discovered at the sites of Korokan, Dazaifu, and Fukuoka castle, which are conjectured to have been made between the late seventh and early eighth century, and the government office sites in the Kinai region. The excavations also include shards of long-necked jars unearthed at the Ishikami shite in the Asuka Village in Nara Prefecture, and artifacts discovered at the Heijo Palace site, Shokudo site in Shitennoji, City of Osaka, Ooi site in Osaka Prefecture, and Nishitachibana site in the Asuka Village, Nara Prefecture. These discoveries suggest not only that the cultural imports from Silla were related with the Japanese Imperial court and major Buddhist temples but also that there were Silla artisans working in the workshops operated by the Japanese government. Remarkably, however, excavations show that the use of Silla

artifacts in the castles, government offices and temples in Japan became significantly decreased after the eighth century, reflecting the relationship between Silla and Japan which became lukewarm.

The victory of Silla against Tang at the Battle of Gibeolpo waged in 676 and the following withdrawal of the latter from the southern part of the Korean Peninsula resulted in the diplomatic break between the two for about thirty-five years. It was the Tang that wanted to recover the relationship by sending an envoy to the Silla King Sinmun (r. 681-692), officially admitting him as the ruler of the kingdom and investing him with the authority his father, King Munmu (r. 661-681), had relished. It was also a situation Silla had expected as it needed to overcome the popular unrest caused by the long-drawn war and restore the social and political order. The restoration of full-fledged relationship between the two dynasties was materialized in the eighth century when Silla fully regained its political and social stability under the reign of King Seongdeok (r. 702-737). The king was enthusiastic about establishing friendly diplomatic relations with Tang and sent his envoys to China as many as forty-six times in the thirty-six years of his reign. Silla was again brought to political and social unrest after the reign of King Hyegong (r. 765-780), but its friendly relations with Tang continued to be maintained through brisk exchange of people and materials.

The close diplomatic ties resulted in the introduction of new social systems and cultural items to Silla by Tang as the first was eager to adapt the foreign cultures to its traditions and needs. That explains why there are in Gyeongju, the royal capital of Silla, many archaeological sites producing cultural items from Tang as well as those recreated by Silla artisans based on Chinese models.

Of the remaining Tang articles from the period, ceramic works occupy a prominent position in numbers, diversity and the wide area they have been discovered, which include some religious and administrative hubs outside the capital of Silla, such as the sites of Busosanseong Fortress in Buyeo, Mireuksa Temple in Iksan, Marosanseong Fortress in Gwangyang and Cheonghaejin in Jangdo Island as well as those of Wolji, Hwangnyongsa Temple and Cheongwansa Temple in Gyeongju. The ceramic vessels from Tang were used as table ware for special occasions or, though rarely, as funerary urns. The urn unearthed at a site in Bae-ri of Gyeongju features the body combining a double-lugged *Yua* jar and bowl while that discovered in Joyang-dong a Tang Sancai tripod with a copper lid made in Silla.





The metal artifacts from the period are largely represented by bronze mirrors and Buddhist items. Of the bronze mirrors, while there are only a limited number of Unified Silla mirrors remaining today, one decorated with the "sea beasts and grapes design" discovered in Dongsan-ri of Cheonbuk-myeon, Gyeongju and that with "auspicious flowers and twin birds design" are regarded noteworthy. While opinions vary as to whether they were imported from Tang or made by Silla artisans on the basis of the originals from Tang, mirrors of the first type, which represents the bronze mirrors of Tang, were excavated at the sites of Bunhwangsa Temple and


Fig 197 Continental celadon and tri-color painted vessels excavated from Gyeongju (①Bae-ri, ②Seokjang-dong, ③Joyang-dong, ④Najeong site, ⑤the Silla Capital site of Guhwang-dong)

Fig 198 Craft items excavated from the pagoda at Ingaksa temple, Gunwi (bottle-shaped incense burner, incense jar, bottles)

the royal palace of Silla in Gyeongju and the Marosanseong Fortress site in Gwangyang. The mirror discovered at the Marosanseong site have attracted particular attention from historians, as it is square and was accompanied by Chinese ceramic vessels of Yue ware and *Xing* ware. The mirrors of the second type earned great popularity among Korean people in the following Goryeo Period.

As for the metal craft of Unified Silla, its brilliance is represented by various Buddhist ritual objects such as sarira reliquaries and articles of daily use at the royal court excavated in large numbers at the Wolji site. Some of these metal artifacts representing the cultural splendor of Unified Silla include those imported from Tang, such as a long-handled incense burner contained in a hoard discovered at a site in Malheul-ri of Changnyeong, and another long-handled incense burner, kundika and incense case discovered at the site of a stupa of Ingaksa Temple in Gunwi. The incense burner of Malheul-ri displays typical features of the Buddhist ritual implements of this type except for the inner burner. The discoveries at the Ingaksa Temple site share remarkable similarities with the votive offerings found at the stupa of Chan Master Shenhui in China in 756, and are believed to have been imported from Tang together with celadon vessels with ring foot.






Fig 199 Items indicating exchange with the Western Regions(Central Asia) (①from the Square Mound Tomb at Gujeong-dong, ②Close-up of the peacock design stone in the Gyeongju National Museum, ③from the Songrimsa Temple in Chilgok, and ④Wolji)

Archaeologists also found at various Unified Silla sites artifacts that they believe were imported from the Western Regions, i.e. present-day Central Asia. The discoveries include a glass bowl used as a sarira reliquary and found at the brick pagoda of Songnimsa Temple in Chilgok, a glass cup unearthed at the Wolji site in Gyeongju, stone figurines of men from Western Regions, and a range of decorative motifs. There are in Gwereung and King Heungeok's Tombs stone guardians of civil and military officials featuring the appearance of foreign men and another image of a foreign man carved on a corner pillar of the Square Tomb of Gujeong-dong. Some scholars interpret the images as evidences to show that there were foreign officials serving the Silla court, while others believe that they were made under the influence from the carvings of "Western People" produced by many Chinese dynasties including Tang. The exotic decorative designs such as the Mandala flower and the twin peacocks arranged in symmetry are also believed to have arrived via China rather than through a direct contact between Silla and the Western Regions.

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Compiled by Committee for Compilation of *The Millennial History and Culture of Silla*

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http://www.designgb.co.kr

Printed by Taewoong C&P

Printed on 2016. 12. 1.

Published on 2016. 12. 30.

ISBN 978-89-6176-247-2 98910
978-89-6176-245-8 98910 (SET)