

## Gaya History and Culture

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### Introduction

Gaya (42–562) has long been denied its proper place in Korean history due to the “Three Kingdoms Period” conception that views ancient Korean history exclusively in terms of the Goguryeo (37 BCE–668 CE), Baekje (18 BCE–660 CE), and Silla (57 BCE–935 CE) Kingdoms. Furthermore, the view of “Imna Ilbon-bu” (任那日本府) portrays Gaya territory as actually having been under the control of forces from ancient Japan. However, evidence from the excavation of numerous Gaya tombs that has been taking place since the 1970s in order to allow land development has clearly established a unique and independent Gaya culture which in many ways rivaled that of Silla.

Centered in what is now Gyeongsangnam-do Province at the southernmost reach of the Korean Peninsula, for most of its history, Gaya existed as a confederation of statelets and then took on the form of an early ancient state in its final stages. Gaya culture emerged early in the first century BCE and survived for nearly seven centuries (Kim Taesik 2002, 78–79).

No systematic chronology of Gaya exists since the polity did not record its own history. The historical data on Gaya, therefore, consists only of fragmentary records extracted from

the writings of neighboring states. These sources are as follows: Chinese sources, including “Account of the Eastern Barbarians” (東夷傳) in the “Book of Wei” (魏書) from *Sanguozhi* (三國志, Records of the Three Kingdoms) and “Account of Gara” (加羅國傳) and “Illustration of Envoys Presenting Tribute at the Liang Court” (梁職貢圖) from *Nanqishu* (南齊書, Book of Southern Qi); Korean sources, including *Samguk sagi* (三國史記, History of the Three Kingdoms), *Samguk yusa* (三國遺事, Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), the Stele of King Gwanggaeto, and *Sinjeung dongguk yeoji seungnam* (新增東國輿地勝覽, Revised and Expanded Edition of Survey on the Geography of Joseon); and Japanese sources, such as the *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀, The Chronicles of Japan). Among these sources, three are particularly essential to our understanding of Gaya history.

Consisting of sixty-five chapters written in the annals-and-biographies format, *Sanguozhi* is a historical text covering the period of the Chinese Three Kingdoms (220–280) of Wei, Shu, and Wu that was compiled by a Western Jin Dynasty (265–316) official named Chen Shou (陳壽, 233–297). The rich and detailed passages concerning relations between the Samhan polities that appear in the “Account of the Eastern Barbarians” section of the “Book of Wei” make it the most important written source for understanding the nature of Gaya up to the



Fig. 1. Artifacts from Daho-ri Tomb No. 1 in Changwon. L. 61.1 cm (Left Scabbard), L. 60.9 cm (Right Scabbard). National Museum of Korea

014 third century.

Spanning fifty chapters also written in the annals-and-biographies format, *Samguk sagi*, is a historical text covering Korea's Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods that was compiled by the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392) official Kim Busik (金富軾, 1075–1151) in 1145 after his retirement. The “Annals of Silla” (新羅本紀) is scattered with numerous references to Gaya that have been used to establish the conventional chronology for Gaya's history. The “Book of Music” (樂志), “Book of Geography” (地理志), and “Biographies” (列傳) sections also contain fragmentary records related to Gaya.

*Nihon shoki* is a historical text consisting of thirty chapters in a chronological format covering the ancient period of Japanese history. It was completed in 720 by Prince Toneri (676–735), a son of Empress Genshō (r. 715–724). Records from the reigns of Emperor Keitai (r. 507–531) and Emperor Kinmei (r. 539–571), which contain information obtained both directly and indirectly from the “Annals of Baekje” (百濟本記), provide plentiful accounts on the respective members of the Gaya Confederacy around the early to mid-sixth century. However, these records can, in places, be severely distorted by the Japanese and Baekje perspectives from which they were derived.

The available archaeological data concerning Gaya

has mostly been recovered from tomb sites in today's Gyeongsangnam-do and Gyeongsangbuk-do Provinces in South Korea, where the bulk of Gaya territory was concentrated. Many of these Gaya tombs were elite burials, and the practice of interring objects used in daily life along with the deceased has made it possible to compile important information on Gaya's history and culture. Gaya tomb sites of particular importance are the burial grounds of Yangdong-ri and Daeseong-dong in Gimhae, the Bokcheon-dong burial ground in Busan, the Marisan burial ground in Haman, and the Jisan-dong burial ground in Goryeong.

## Establishment and Development of Early Gaya

### First Century BCE to Second Century CE

An agricultural society characterized by dolmens and pottery with undecorated surfaces flourished in the Nakdonggang River Basin of southern Korea during the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. However, the geographical conditions of this region nestled in the southeastern corner of the peninsula were unfavorable to

the introduction of more developed elements of civilization. As a result, the degree of social organization and the ability to craft metal objects were less developed there compared to other regions around the Korean Peninsula. Fortunately for the residents, an opportunity to overcome this geographic handicap came from the outside. Gojoseon located in the northwestern region of the peninsula fell in 108 BCE under attacks from an army dispatched by Emperor Wu (r. 141–87 BCE) of China's Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). The chaos of war produced a large number of refugees, and a large number of them appear to have made their way to southeastern Korea via land or sea routes.

Sites such as the Daho-ri burial ground in Changwon, which was established in the first century BCE, demonstrate the emergence of new power groups distinct from the indigenous groups of the region. The definitive tomb at this site, Daho-ri Tomb No. 1, is a wooden coffin tomb that yielded black and brownish pottery with undecorated surfaces, Gojoseon-style lacquerware, and metal objects such as Korean-type bronze daggers, bronze spearheads, bronze bells, bronze mirrors, iron daggers, and iron axes (Fig. 1). The pottery from this burial shows no significant changes from earlier examples, but the lacquerware and metal objects are novel examples not previously seen in this region and reflect the introduction of more evolved culture elements.

The area that is now Gyeongsangnam-do Province witnessed an increase in the number of wooden coffin tombs from the first century BCE onwards. The pottery recovered from these wooden coffin tombs shows the transition from brownish wares with decorated surfaces to grayish *wajil* pottery (瓦質土器). The impetus for the manufacture of this *wajil* pottery was the adoption of new production technologies by local craftspeople. The Gaya foundation myth presented in the “Garak Gukgi” (駕洛國記) section of *Samguk yusa* relays how the ‘nine *gan*’ (九干), the chiefs of the indigenous polities of the Gimhae region, selected as their king Suro—a man from an external lineage said to have descended from the heavens—and established the state. This myth can be viewed as depicting the complex interactions of cultural elements observed in the archaeological record.

A transition in burial practices during the middle and late second century can be observed at the Yangdong-ri burial ground, as reflected by the use of wooden chamber tomb that feature greater internal space and an increase in the number of iron objects found among the grave goods. Yangdong-ri Tomb No. 162 is a typical example of an early-phase wooden cist burial (Fig. 2). Individuals interred in the Yangdong-ri burial



Fig. 2. Yangdong-ri Tomb No. 162 in Gimhae

ground are likely to have been the heads of Guyaguk (狗邪國)—later became Geumgwan Gaya—which controlled both economic wealth and political power in the area.

### Third Century

The Gyeongsang region in the early third century was home to the twelve statelets (國, *guk*) of Jinhan including Saroguk (斯盧國, which later became Silla) and the Byeonhan twelve statelets including Gayaguk — also known as Guyaguk, Gaya Hanguk (加倭韓國), or Geumgwan Gaya. Archaeological evidence indicates that these *guks* were peer-level polities, and even the comparatively advanced statelets of Gayaguk and Saroguk had yet to gain hegemony over other statelets. Long-distance trade within northeast Asia at the time was carried out through the Nangnang (108 BCE–313 CE, Ch. Lelang) and Daebang (early 3rd century–314, Ch. Daifang) Commanderies, which served as intermediaries connecting China, the Korean Peninsula, and the Japanese Archipelago. In the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, Gayaguk was located at the mouth of the Nakdonggang River in what is now Gimhae and served as the most active intermediary in this trade in iron and other advanced items of civilization. This suggests that the twelve statelets of Byeonhan had integrated with Gayaguk at the political center and formed a coalition of Byeonhan statelets, otherwise known as the Early Gaya Confederacy (Kim Taesik 1993, 66) (Map 1).

The confederacies of the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, namely the one controlled by the chief of Mahan, the one ruled over by the king of Jinhan, and Sinmiguk (新彌國), all actively conducted trade as independent entities. The political growth of these Samhan heads went hand in hand with the decline of the governing authority of the Western Jin Dynasty in China (Yoon Yonggu 2004, 138). In the late third century, the center of power in Gimhae was relocated from



Map 1. Location of the Statelets Forming the Early Gaya Confederacy

Yangdong-ri and its environs in Jucheon-myeon to the area around the Daeseong-dong burial ground, which is located in the center of present-day Gimhae. The situation at the time is well illustrated by Tomb No. 29 of the Daeseong-dong burial ground (Fig. 3). Compared to the tombs in the burial grounds found in the surrounding areas, the Daeseong-dong tombs are relatively larger in scale and contain a greater volume of grave goods. This is taken to illustrate a power imbalance that existed between the group associated with the Daeseong-dong burial ground and neighboring groups.

The Jinhan cultural sphere with Sarouguk as its political center and the Byeonhan cultural sphere, centered on Guyaguk, were originally quite similar, but a clear distinction in local



Fig. 3. Daeseong-dong Tomb No. 29 in Gimhae





Fig. 4. Bronze Spiral-shaped Shield Ornaments. (top and center) Excavated from Daeseong-dong Tomb No. 13 in Gimhae, Gaya, 4th Century. D. 12.0 cm. Jinju National Museum. (bottom) Excavated from Daeseong-dong Tomb No. 2 in Gimhae, Gaya, 4th Century. D. 6.1 cm. Jinju National Museum

pottery styles emerged in the late third century along the border between what is now Busan and Ulsan. This period also witnessed the deposition of large quantities of iron weapons as grave goods, an expansion of the social classes that could access such weapons, and the appearance of iron armor. This indicates that relations between the statelets of the Gyeongsang region had become strained in the late third century and warfare had increased, resulting in a consolidation of the Jinhan statelets around Saroguk and the Byeonhan statelets around Gayaguk, and the two polities' respective development into political authorities (Kim Taesik. 2010, 296).

#### Fourth Century

The Nangnang and Daebang Commanderies were destroyed in the early fourth century by the Goguryeo Kingdom, a state based in the northern portion of the peninsula. This had significant implications for Gayaguk, which had developed in the southeastern part of the peninsula by facilitating long-distance trade with the Daebang Commandery. As the maritime network through which Gayaguk had obtained advanced culture weakened, the eight *Posang* statelets (浦上八國, eight polities located in coastal port regions) who no longer acknowledged Gayaguk hegemony mounted an attack. Gayaguk fended them off by successfully rallying the polities located in the hinterlands of its riverine trade routes (in the middle and upper reaches of the Nakdonggang River) and those along the southern reaches of the eastern coast. Gayaguk's victory does not seem to have been complete, however: Starting in the early fourth century, two distinct ceramic styles for mounted pottery and other vessel

types came to be established in the broader region, respectively to the east and west of the Masan Bay area (Ahn Jaeho and Song Gye Hyun 1986, 53). This appears to indicate an east-west divide in the Gaya Confederacy that emerged out of the war of the eight *Posang* statelets.

Following the erasure of Daebang from its existing trade network in the late fourth century, eastern Gaya, centered in modern Gimhae, had no option but to focus on trade with Wa (倭) in the Japanese Archipelago. Daeseong-dong Tombs Nos. 2, 13, and 23, all dating to the late fourth century, yielded bronze spiral-shaped shield ornaments of Japanese origin (Kyung Sung University Museum 2000, 183) (Fig. 4). On the other hand, the Jinhan region grew increasingly closer to Goguryeo, as demonstrated by the appearance there of Goguryeo-style objects.

The tombs of the Bokcheon-dong burial ground, situated in between the Gimhae and Gyeongju areas, were characterized by a juxtaposition of elements from both Silla and Geumgwan Gaya culture until the middle of the fourth century. Silla-style artifacts disappear entirely, starting with tombs from the late fourth century, however, while Geumgwan Gaya-style artifacts continued to be interred (Bokcheon Museum 2004, 90). This has been taken to indicate an expansion of Geumgwan Gaya's influence and power, which was supported by alliances with Baekje and Wa. In other words, it seems likely that Gaya was pressuring Silla with help from the Wa army. Around the same period, King Geunchogo (r. 346–375) of Baekje attacked Goguryeo and gained control over territories in what is now Hwanghae-do Province.

The situation quickly reversed following ascension of King Gwanggaeto (r. 391–412) to the Goguryeo throne in 391. By 396, Goguryeo's might had grown to the extent that it was able to seize 58 Baekje fortresses in that year alone. King Gwanggaeto also sent an army of fifty thousand infantry and cavalry troops to assist Silla in the year 400. Upon their arrival, the Goguryeo units chased the Wa forces from Silla territory and back to Imna Gara (任那加羅), referring to the Gimhae region, the center of the Gaya Confederacy. The fact that the Wa troops fled all the way from Gyeongju to the Gimhae area indicates that these Wa forces had been dependent upon Imna Gara's support. When the pursuing troops of the Goguryeo-Silla alliance reached Imna Gara, several fortresses surrendered. This event eventually allowed Silla to overcome Gaya in the competition for hegemony over the Gyeongsang region. Another result is that Baekje's trade network with Wa, which had utilized the Gaya regions as intermediary nodes, could no longer be maintained. The cessation of large-scale tomb construction in Gimhae in the

early fifth century—as evidenced in the Daeseong-dong burial ground—can be seen as an indication of the sudden collapse of the Gaya polity in this area.

the Nakdonggang River, on the other hand, continued on with little disturbance. In particular, the polities in the Goryeong and Hapcheon areas in the mountainous interior of the Gyeongsang region, which had previously been a backwater region, began to slowly develop from the early fifth century onwards. The Banpaguk (伴跛國) polity in the Goryeong region accepted migrant artisans from the Gimhae area specializing in pottery and iron production and began to exploit the local iron resources of the Yaro (冶爐) area at the foot of Mt. Gayasan to develop its iron production system (Kim Taesik 1986, 28). From the middle of the fifth century, Banpaguk began to dominate trade with both Baekje and Wa. After changing its name to Dae Gaya, it organized the surrounding polities to once again embody a Gaya Confederacy. The fact that Dae

## Growth and Collapse of Late Gaya

### Fifth Century

Gaya polities to the east of the Nakdonggang River, in areas such as modern-day Changnyeong and Busan, surrendered without resistance to the allied Goguryeo and Silla forces that had vanquished Imna Gara. Gaya polities located to the west of



Map 2. Location of the Statelets Forming the Late Gaya Confederacy

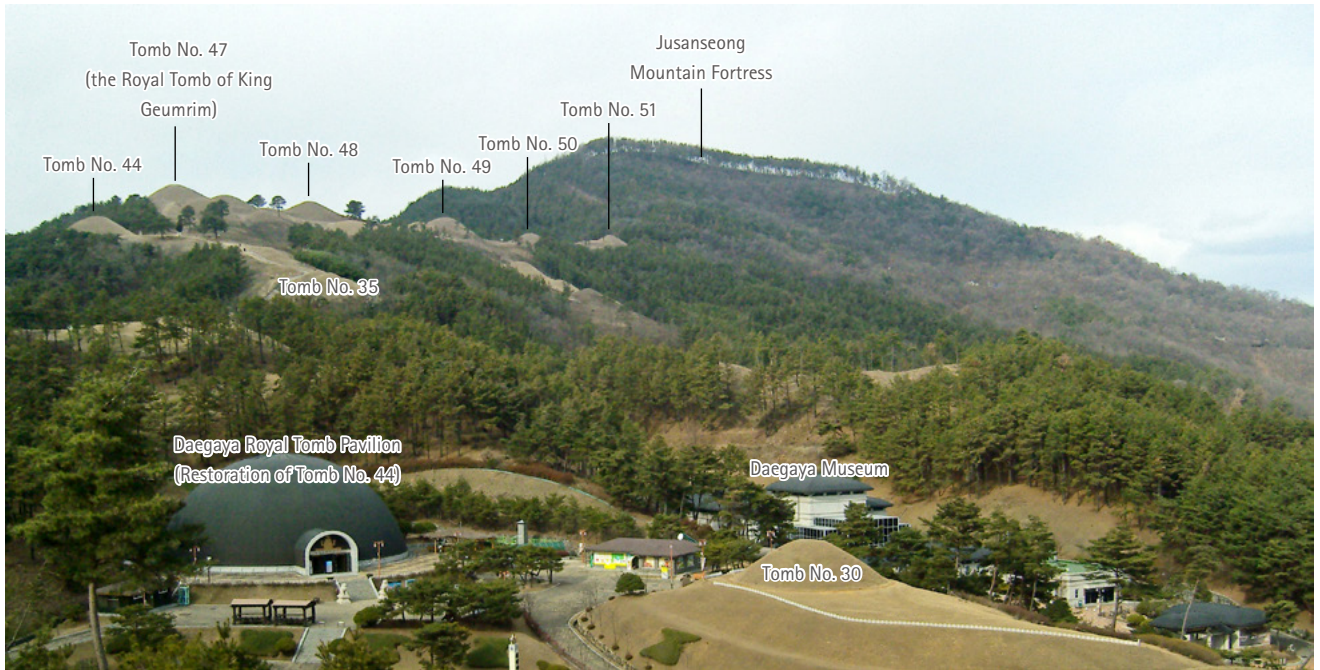


Fig. 5. Jisan-dong Burial Ground in Goryeong

Gaya's mythological progenitor King Ijinasi was believed to be the son of the spirit of Mountain Gayasan and the elder brother of King Suro of Geumgwanguk (金官國), also called as South Garaguk (加羅國), seems to suggest that political forces based in Goryeong had become the leaders of the Late Gaya Confederacy.

Dae Gaya expanded westwards in the late fifth century, crossing the Sobaek Mountain Range to annex the polities in Namwon and Imsil (in present-day Jeollabuk-do Province) and Yeosu, Suncheon, and Gwangyang (in present-day Jeollanam-do Province) and consolidate their territories. The Late Gaya Confederacy at its zenith consisted of 22 statelets organized around Dae Gaya in Goryeong (Map 2).

In 479, the king of Dae Gaya—King Haji (r. unknown),



Fig. 6. Jisan-dong Tombs Nos. 49, 48, and 47 in Goryeong (from left to right)

also referred to as the King of Gara (加羅王)—received the title Bogukjanggun Bongukwang (輔國將軍本國王), meaning “General Defending the State, King of Gara” after presenting a tribute to the Southern Qi Dynasty (479–502) court. It is highly likely that the final resting place of King Haji is Tomb No. 44 in the Jisan-dong burial ground in Goryeong (Fig. 5). The largest tomb in this burial ground is Tomb No. 47 (presumed to be the Royal Tomb of King Geumrim) (Fig. 6) with a mound measuring 50 meters in diameter, demonstrating the grandeur of Dae Gaya royal tombs.

Around the same time, a consensus emerged in Silla regarding the need to distance itself from Goguryeo influence, which ultimately backfired and resulted in the capture of seven Silla fortresses by the Goguryeo army in 481, including Homyeongseong Fortress in present-day Yeongdeok in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. Goguryeo forces then marched on Mijilbu Fortress in now Pohang in Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, but Silla was able to successfully defend it with support from troops dispatched by Gaya and Baekje. The state of affairs on the Korean Peninsula in the late fifth century stabilized with the forces of Baekje, Silla, and Gaya allied to defend against southern expansion by Goguryeo.

### 510s

In 512, in an effort to facilitate direct trade with Wa, King Muryeong (r. 501–523) of Baekje took control over the eastern Jeolla region statelets of Sangdari (上哆唎), Hadari (下哆唎),



Sata (娑陀), and Moru (牟婁), which were formerly within the sphere of influence of Gaya. A large quantity of late fifth-early sixth century Goryeong-style pottery was found in burial ground at Wunpyeong-ri in Suncheon where believed to be associated with the Moru polity, whereas a transition to Baekje-style stone-lined tombs can be observed around early sixth century in the burial grounds of present-day Yeosu and Suncheon (Lee Donghee 2007, 103). This seems to suggest that these four locales in the southern Jeolla region were originally Gaya statelets that later became incorporated into Baekje territory. In 513, Baekje also made inroads into the Gaya statelet of Gimun (己汶, located in what is now Namwon, Imsil, and the southern portion of Jangsu) under the pretext of facilitating trade with Wa. Baekje thus appears to have emerged victorious in a territorial struggle with Dae Gaya and gained control of all of the eastern Jeolla region. As a result, the Sobaek Mountain Range became established as a natural boundary between Gaya and Baekje, and Dae Gaya lost access to the trade route along the Seomjingang River leading to the southern coast.

In 515, Dae Gaya constructed fortresses at Jatan (子呑) and Daesa (帶沙), polities located respectively in present-day Jinju and Hadong, to defend against both Baekje and Wa. Fortresses were also constructed at Iyeolbi (爾列比) and Masubi (麻須比), located respectively in Burim-myeon in Uiryeong and Yongsan-myeon in Changnyeong, in order to pressure Silla. Dae Gaya's territory at the time was centered around Goryeong in Gyeongsang-do Province. It extended westwards to reach the Sobaek Mountain Range and Mt. Jirisan and southwards to the Namgang River. This territory coincides broadly with the distribution of Goryeong-style pottery around the beginning of the sixth century (Park Cheonsu 2004, 236–237). It, therefore, appears that Gaya had managed to successfully consolidate its control over this territory and developed into an early ancient state by the 510s at the latest (Kwon Haksoo 2003, 86). The fact that Dae Gaya fortress construction did not take place south of the Namgang River, such as in Haman, Gimhae, or Goseong, seems to indicate that although the polities based in these areas were also members of the Gaya Confederacy, they had managed to remain relatively independent of Dae Gaya's influence.

#### 520s–530s

In order to secure a route to the southern coast along the Nakdonggang River, Dae Gaya sought an alliance with Silla through marriage. King Inoe (r. unknown) of Dae Gaya proposed a marriage alliance in 522, in response to which Silla's King Beopheung (r. 514–540) sent a sister of the Silla nobleman

Ichan (伊瀆, second highest official rank in Silla) Bijobu (比助夫) to seal the alliance. The Silla princess dispatched to Dae Gaya soon gave birth to a son, Crown Prince Wolgwang, who became the last king of Dae Gaya. This alliance fell apart a few years later, however, following King Beopheung's original design, and signs of division appeared within the Gaya Confederacy. Taking advantage of this situation, Silla threatened Takgitanguk (喙己吞國), a polity located in present-day Yeongsan-myeon in Changnyeong, in 529 and forced its surrender. The southern polities of the Gaya Confederacy consequently lost faith in Dae Gaya and strengthened their allegiance to Allaguk (安羅國), a Gaya polity based in what is now Haman.

Baekje attacked Allaguk in 531 in order to preempt an invasion of southern Gaya by Silla and took possession of Geoltakseong Fortress. Silla responded by annexing Geumgwanguk in Gimhae in 532, but still allowed its royal family preferential treatment. In 534, Baekje advanced into the northern region of Taksunguk (卓淳國), located in present-day Changwon, and built a fortress and stationed troops at Guryemora (久禮牟羅), located in present-day Chilwon-myeon in Haman. Geumgwanguk and its neighboring polities were subsequently annexed by Silla and reorganized into prefectures and counties of the Silla Kingdom. Allaguk and the Gaya polities located to its southwest, on the other hand, fell under the political influence of Baekje. Around 538, the king of Taksunguk summoned the Silla army in order to counter pressure from Baekje and willingly submitted to annexation by Silla. Silla went on to expel the Baekje forces stationed at Guryeosanseong Mountain Fortress.

The northern Gaya polities under the influence of Dae Gaya adopted a pro-Baekje stance in response to Silla's betrayal and to counter the independent attitudes of the southern Gaya polities. However, Baekje's increasing authority led to a weakening of Dae Gaya control, and the degree of its consolidation lessened to that of a confederation of statelets. On the other hand, the southern Gaya polities came to form an autonomous confederation led by Allaguk. Allaguk was able to adopt a relatively independent attitude toward Baekje based on its close relationship with Silla and Wa and emerged as a central power within the Gaya Confederacy to rival Dae Gaya. This ultimately led to a north-south division within the confederation.

#### 540s–560s

In the middle of the sixth century, the Gaya Confederacy



sought ways to maintain its independence while remaining prepared for invasions by Baekje and Silla. Despite their alliance against southward advances by Goguryeo, Baekje and Silla still competed against each other over Gaya territory. Faced with this situation, the Late Gaya Confederacy—although divided into the two factions led by Dae Gaya in Goryeong to the north and Allaguk in Haman to the south—formed a committee consisting of seven or eight officials (執事) to undertake diplomatic negotiations with both Baekje and Silla. However, Allaguk sent secret communications to Goguryeo in 548 and requested that its forces attack Baekje’s Doksanseong Mountain Fortress, in Yesan, Chungcheongnam-do Province. This battle was won by Baekje, and Allaguk lost the confidence of the members of the confederation when its betrayal was revealed. As a result, the Gaya Confederacy became subordinate to Baekje around 550, accepting Dae Gaya’s preference in the matter.

Having increased his power through the subordination of Gaya, King Seong (r. 523–554) of Baekje established an alliance with Silla and recovered his kingdom’s former territory in the Hangang River basin in 551 in an attack on Goguryeo’s southern reaches. However, the 120-year-old Silla-Baekje alliance soon came to an end due to conflicts over the lower reaches of the Hangang River. In order to reclaim this region, Baekje’s King Seong led an army comprised of troops from Baekje, Gaya, and Wa to attack Silla. This allied force suffered heavy losses at a battle at Silla’s Gwansanseong Mountain Fortress in Okcheon, Chungcheongbuk-do Province, resulting in great military and political confusion in Baekje, which in turn made it more difficult for the Gaya Confederacy—now with a heavy reliance on Baekje—to maintain its independence. Silla raised a large army and conquered Dae Gaya in 562. Around this period, ten polities of the Gaya Confederacy fell to Silla: Allaguk, Saigiguk (斯二岐國), Daraguk (多羅國), Jolmaguk (卒麻國), Gojaguk (古自國), Jataguk (子他國), Sanbanhaguk (散半下國), Geolsonguk (乞浪國), and Imnyeguk (稔禮國).

## Gaya Culture

### Industry

Gaya’s economy consisted primarily of fishing, farming, iron production, and long-distance exchange. Shell middens, which can shed light on everyday life, began to make an appearance in Busan, Changwon, Gimhae, and Yangsan around the beginning

of the first millennium. Artifacts that have been recovered amidst the shells in these middens include spindle whorls, fishing-net sinkers, bone implements, pottery, iron hand knives, iron sickles, iron arrowheads, and fishhooks. Along with the oyster, clam, and conch shells, the middens have also yielded remains of food, including rice, barley, wheat, legumes, and millet (Donga University Museum 1981). The contents of these shell middens indicate that the communities of this period relied on farming and fishing.

Iron farming tools such as iron hand knives, axe-heads, hoes, and weeding plows came to be used in what is now Gyeongsangnam-do Province after the first century BCE. Farming at the time was carried out in an intensive manner, with rice being sown in paddy fields irrigated through channels. Iron sickles and iron spades for irrigation work were deposited as grave goods in small Gaya tombs from the fourth to fifth centuries. In contrast, cast iron axe heads, U-shaped shovel blades, and iron rakes (with finds being limited to one or two per item) have only been discovered in medium- to large-sized tombs (Lee Hyunhye 1991, 57–68). A wide range of crops was grown in Gaya territory, including rice, common millet, barley, foxtail millet, wheat, legumes, and adzuki beans. In addition, the animal bones recovered from archaeological investigations have revealed the presence of domesticated dogs, swine, cattle, horses, and chickens, along with wild deer, roe deer, and boar.

Bronze items, including daggers, spearheads, mirrors, and bells, began to be used by Gaya communities after the first century BCE, alongside iron weapons such as daggers, arrowheads, spearheads, and dagger-axes. The volume of iron objects deposited as grave goods increased dramatically from the late second century CE, accompanied by the appearance of longswords, plowshares, rakes, and horse bits, and a diversification of the existing iron axe heads. It was around this time that ‘flat iron axe heads’ (板狀鐵斧), which lack a sharpened blade and could not have served any utilitarian function, appeared. These axe heads were, in fact, iron ingots (Song Gyehyun 1995, 131–133) prepared in advance for the mass production of iron objects and were exported to Nangnang, Han, Ye, Wa, and other regions. Ritual implements (such as highly decorated iron spearheads or weapon-like saw knives), vertical plate armor, and iron horse armor were new types of iron objects that came to be used after the late third century. In the lower reaches of the Nakdonggang River, iron ingots standardized in terms of weight and dimensions (similar to coinage) came to be produced on a large scale after the late fourth century. The large iron ingots and cast iron spades that

have been recovered from early fifth century tombs in Osaka and Hyogo, Nara, and Shiga Prefectures in Japan's Kinki region originated in the lower reaches of the Nakdonggang River (Azuma Ushio 2002, 33).

From the perspective of maritime trade, Gayaguk (based in Gimhae) was the center of a long-distance trade network that linked the Nangnang Commandery with the statelets along the western and southern coastal regions of the Korean Peninsula and Wa. Gaya exported iron to Nangnang, from which it imported advanced items of civilization. Iron and advanced items of civilization were sent to Wa, and human labor and military service were returned as payment (Suzuki Yasutami 2002, 15). Among the artifacts discovered at sites within Gaya territory, *Wangmang* coins (王莽錢), *wuzhu* coins (五銖錢), bronze tripods, bronze mirrors with inner flower designs (內行花文鏡), and bronze TLV mirrors reflect the trade with Nangnang. Artifacts associated with nomadic horse-riding cultures, such as bronze and iron cauldrons, tiger-shaped belt buckles, and swords with curved blades, have also been discovered at Gaya sites (Shin Gyeongcheol 2000, 59). These

items were likely obtained through coastal maritime routes. Artifacts such as *haji* ware (土師器, Jp. *hajiki*) represented with double-rimmed pottery, broad bronze spearheads, bronze spiral-shaped shield ornaments, jade arrowheads, and spindle-whorl-shaped stone objects illustrate the exchanges taking place with Wa.

Trade was not as active during the Late Gaya as it was during Early Gaya; nevertheless, trade with Wa was carried out after the middle of the fifth century by the polity based in Goryeong. Tombs of high-level individuals found throughout the Japanese Archipelago have yielded gilt-bronze crowns featuring large flame-shaped decorations, iron spearheads with octagonal sockets, s-shaped horse bits, gold belt buckles with openwork dragon patterns, earrings with hanging ornaments, dagger-shaped horse harness pendants, and horse armor, all of which are prestige goods associated with Dae Gaya (Park Cheonsu 1996, 85). Goryeong-style pottery, such as long-necked lidded jars, has been found throughout the Kyushu region of Japan and in the coastal areas of the Seto Inland Sea (Sadamori Hideo 1997, 174).



Fig. 7. Pasa Pagoda Situated in Front of the Tomb of Queen Consort Heo

## Religion

Regarding Gaya and Buddhism, it is recorded that the Pasa Stone Pagoda was brought to Gimhae from the Ayuta State of India by Queen Consort Heo in 48 CE (Fig. 7). It is believed, however, that the association with the Ayuta State was a later addition to the myth of Queen Consort Heo's marriage appended in order to establish a link with Buddhism, very likely made around the time that Wanghusa Temple (*wanghu* means 'queen consort') was established during Silla's Middle Period (654–780). In addition, the 'Pasa Stone Pagoda' myth relating that Queen Consort Heo's ship carried a stone pagoda in order to ensure safe passage on the seas, as well as the story that this stone pagoda was the one later located at Hogsya Temple (虎溪寺), were both Goryeo-era inventions.

The royal genealogy of Dae Gaya features personages such as Queen Mother Jeonggyeon, the mother of King Ijinasi (the mythological founding father of Dae Gaya), and Crown Prince Wolgwang, who was born of the marriage alliance between the Gaya King Inwae and his Queen Consort from Silla. Queen Mother Jeonggyeon and Crown Prince Wolgwang are terms that appear in early scriptures of Hinayana Buddhism. Silla royalty and aristocracy from the early sixth century are said to have had names associated with Buddhism (Kim Cheoljoon 1990, 148) derived from myths associated with Siddhartha Gautama and reflecting the practices and status of Hinayana Buddhism. It is





Fig. 8. Lotus Pattern on the Ceiling of the Burial Chamber in the Goa-dong Mural Tomb in Goryeong

therefore likely that the use of Buddhist-influenced names by members of Dae Gaya's royal family occurred around the final period of Gaya's history after the marriage alliance between Gaya and Silla was established in 522.

The stone chamber mural tomb of Goa-dong in Goryeong, which is believed to be the last Dae Gaya tomb ever constructed, features a tunnel-shaped ceiling structure similar to that of the brick chamber tomb of Songsan-ri in Gongju. The lotus blossom pattern decorating the ceiling shares stylistic elements with the motifs featured in the mural of the Neungsan-ri mural tomb in Buyeo (Jeon Hotae 1992, 171) (Fig. 8). It appears, therefore, that Buddhism was introduced into Gaya through Baekje. This demonstrates that Buddhism had been introduced

to Dae Gaya at least by the last stage of the polity's existence and that its original foundation myth was given a Buddhist bent by adding figures such as Queen Mother Jeonggyeon and Crown Prince Wolgwang in an attempt to shore up its eroding royal authority.

### Customs

It is recorded in the "Account of the Eastern Barbarians" in *Sanguozhi* that the Samhan people placed a high value on beads, which they used to adorn their bodies, but did not treasure gold, silver, or silk. Their taste in luxury items was possibly limited by their shamanistic worldview. However, after the fifth century, precious metals such as gold, gilt-bronze, and silver came to be used to decorate not only personal ornaments such as crowns, necklaces, and rings, but also items such as longswords, horse gear, and coffins. It is, therefore, possible to assume that a wealthy aristocratic class that showed a preference for precious metals had come to be established in the Gaya region by the fifth to sixth centuries.

Sacrificial practices in funerary contexts involved the killing and burial of humans or animals on behalf of the deceased. Numerous burials featuring evidence of sacrifices have been found throughout the Gaya region. The Daeseong-dong burial ground in Gimhae has yielded burials dating to the third and fourth centuries, which contained the remains of two to five sacrificed individuals. The Marisan burial ground in Haman has yielded fifth-century burials that contained the remains of from one to five sacrificed individuals (Kim Segi

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Fig. 9. Marisan Burial Ground in Haman

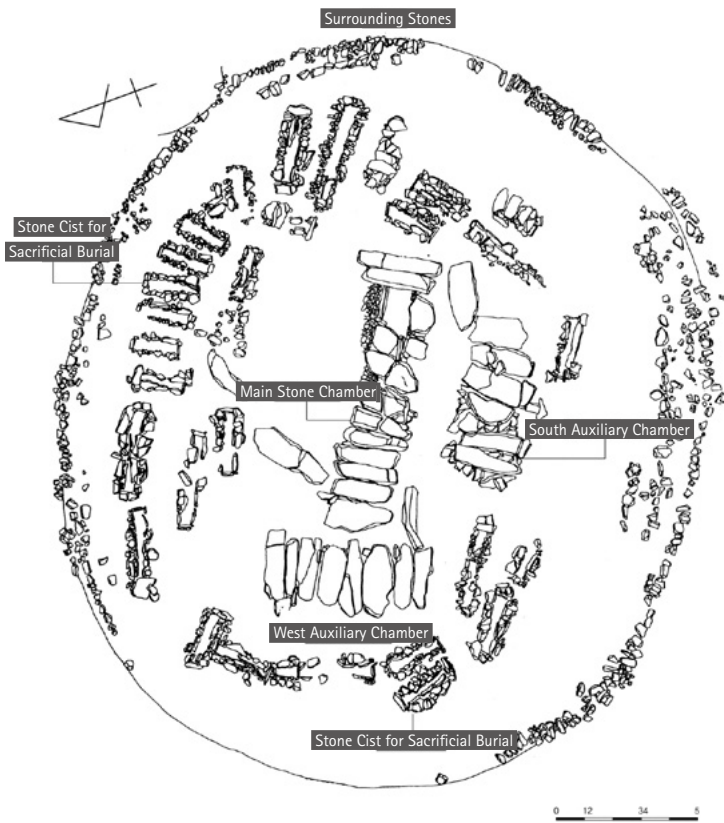


Fig. 10. Layout of Jisan-dong Tomb No. 44 in Goryeong, Gaya, 6th century  
This is the largest Gaya tomb containing sacrificial burials.



Fig. 11. Sacrificial Burial from Daeseong-dong Tomb No. 88 in Gimhae

1997, 109) (Fig. 9). In Goryeong's Jisan-dong Tomb No. 44, which dates to the late fifth century, three centrally positioned large-scale stone cists surrounded by 32 smaller stone cists were found within a single burial mound (Fig. 10). Of the 32 smaller stone cists, which appear to have been sacrificial burials, 22 of them collectively yielded the remains of 24 human sacrifices (Kwon Haksoo 1992, 41) (Fig. 11).

How should this feature of Gaya society be understood? Sacrificial practices appear to be associated with a worldview that regarded the king as the descendent of a heavenly god. The fact that royal authority at the time was dependent upon the semi-voluntary obedience of the populace must also be taken into consideration. Therefore, the widespread practice of human sacrifice in Gaya society can be considered a result of a transitional situation in which a centralized ruling authority had yet to be institutionalized, but the power of the heads of the Gaya Confederacy and its member statelets had been significantly strengthened.

Translated by Ko Ilhong



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