



Figs. 1a and 1b. King's crown ornaments (upper) and Queen's crown ornaments (lower) from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).

Metalwork Objects from Ungjin-period Baekje Tombs in the Gongju Region

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I. Introduction

In 475 CE, the Baekje Kingdom (百濟) was on the verge of collapse after Goguryeo (高句麗) forces suddenly attacked the capital city of Hanseong (near present-day Seoul). Baekje's King Gaero (蓋鹵王, r. 455-475) was killed in the attack, leaving the kingdom in the hands of his brother Munju (文周王, r. 475-477), who had just returned from Silla (新羅), where he had traveled to request military assistance against Goguryeo. Having little choice but to abandon the capital, Munju retreated southward with other members of the royal court and central government, establishing a new Baekje capital in Ungjin (present-day Gongju). Ungjin would remain the capital until 538, when the capital was again moved southwards to Sabi (present-day Buyeo). Ungjin's time as the capital (475-538) was relatively short-lived, but this important period in Baekje history has been illuminated by numerous artifacts and sites found scattered throughout the Gongju region.

To date, a relatively large number of tombs dating to the Ungjin period have been excavated, due in part to a series of research investigations that was carried out for the express purpose of identifying Baekje royal tombs in and around Gongju. Of the excavated tombs, the most exceptional is the Tomb of King Muryeong, which was discovered in 1971. Epitaph plaques inside the tomb confirmed the identity of the deceased as King Muryeong (武寧王, 462-523, r. 501-523) and his queen consort (d. 526). Moreover,

the plaques also provided detailed information about the funerary rites that had been undertaken for the king and queen.

This paper examines fine metalwork artifacts of Baekje that have been recovered from Ungjin-period tombs in the Gongju region. First, the artifacts are compiled and described, and then the development of Baekje metalwork is discussed in order to explicate various aspects of Baekje society.

II. Characteristics of Baekje Metalwork Artifacts from Ungjin-period Tombs

1. Personal Ornaments and Decorative Objects

The two types of metalwork artifacts most frequently found in the tombs of the Ungjin period are personal ornaments and decorative objects. The majority of such artifacts come from the Tomb of King Muryeong, but related artifacts have been recovered from other tombs of the Songsan-ri tumuli group, tombs of the Geumhak-dong tumuli group, Botonggol Tomb 17, and Ungjin-dong Tomb 8. This first section of the paper presents the types of Ungjin Baekje metalwork items that have been found and the characteristics of their production techniques.

1) Personal Ornaments: Personal ornaments from Ungjin-period tombs include crown ornaments, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, belt ornaments, and gilt-bronze shoes, many of which were found

within the Tomb of King Muryeong. Most of these personal ornaments appear to have been worn by the living prior to being placed in the tomb, with the exception of the gilt-bronze shoes, which were made specifically as funerary items. For example, the king's earrings bear traces of repair, implying actual use before burial. In addition, an inscription on the silver bracelets that accompanied the queen indicate that they were made in the second month of the *gyeongja* year (庚子年, 520 CE) six years prior to the queen's death. Finally, the crown ornaments of the king and queen appear to match the description of the "golden flowers" mentioned in *Jiu Tang Shu* (舊唐書), or *Old Book of Tang*, a Chinese historical text. All of these details indicate that the personal ornaments found within the tombs likely had been used prior to the death of the deceased.

Crown Ornaments: Two pairs of gold crown ornaments were found in the Tomb of King Muryeong—one for the king (Fig. 1a) and one for the queen (Fig. 1b). To date, these are the only crown ornaments that have been found in the Gongju area. The king's crown ornament features an arabesque and flame pattern and is adorned with gold spangles. In contrast, the queen's crown ornament is bilaterally symmetrical and lacks gold spangles. Again, these ornaments would seem to match the reference to the "golden flowers that adorned black silk caps" mentioned in the *Jiu Tang Shu*. Unlike the Silla gold crowns from tombs such as Hwangnamdaechong and Cheonmachong, which were made specifically for funerary purposes, the crown and crown ornament recovered from the Tomb of King Muryeong were apparently worn by the king during his lifetime, as evinced by the Chinese records. No silver crown ornaments have yet been found in the tombs of the Ungjin period.

Earrings: Earrings have been found in several Ungjin-period tombs, including the Tomb of King Muryeong, Songsan-ri Tomb 6, a tomb from Gyo-dong,¹ and Jumi-ri Tomb 3. In particular, the characteristic features of Ungjin-period Baekje earrings can be seen in two gold earrings from the Tomb of King

Muryeong. The main hoops of the king's earrings (Fig. 2a) are connected to cylindrical "middle ornaments" with many delicate features. Each middle ornament has a separate upper and lower half formed by three small wing-shaped panels, which were welded together to form a small cylinder. In contrast, the middle ornaments of the queen's earrings (Fig. 2b) are composed of dark green glass beads with round "caps" made from small rings. The use of glass beads in the middle ornaments is considered a characteristic feature of Baekje earrings of the Ungjin period.

Although they both feature glass beads, the two earrings from Gyo-dong (Figs. 2c and 2d) cannot be regarded as a pair, as they differ in size and in the style of their middle ornaments. Reports indicate that earrings with cylindrical middle ornaments, like those frequently used in Silla, were found at Jumi-ri Tomb 3; however, if those earrings still exist, their whereabouts are unknown.

Necklaces, Bracelets, and Rings: The Tomb of King Muryeong yielded two necklaces consisting of faceted cylindrical segments; one necklace has nine such segments (Fig. 3a), while the other has seven. Each of the individual segments is thickest at its center and is slightly curved to conform to the necklace's circular shape. The ends of each segment were extended into long wires that were bent into rings, by which the segments were connected, and then wrapped around the ends of the segment. The same technique was used to make the gold and silver bracelets from the Tomb of King Muryeong and the silver bracelet from a tomb from Songsan-ri.

Many bracelets have been excavated from Ungjin-period tombs, including six pairs discovered in the Tomb of King Muryeong. The most famous are two silver bracelets bearing an inscription (多利作) that can be translated as "made by Dari" (Fig. 3b). These bracelets form a pair, but they can be distinguished by slight differences in their decoration, suggesting that they were not made from the same mold. Even so, given their almost identical size and the lack of welding marks on the surface, it is possible that the bracelets were cast from the same mold and then individually decorated. Gold and silver bracelets from the Tomb of King Muryeong were decorated with notched patterns, but no such patterns appear on silver bracelets from Botonggol Tomb 17 and Ungjindong Tomb 8. Rings were found in Geumhak-dong

¹ A number of the artifacts examined in this paper were excavated in the early twentieth century, during the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), and therefore the exact context of their discovery (e.g., tomb number) is unclear.



Figs. 2a and 2b. King's earrings (upper) and Queen's earrings (lower) from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).



Fig. 3a. Necklace of nine faceted cylindrical segments from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).



Figs. 2c and 2d. Earrings from a tomb in Gyo-dong. (Gongju National Museum).



Fig. 3b. Silver bracelet from the Tomb of King Muryeong, with the inscription "made by Dari." (Gongju National Museum).



Figs. 4a, 4b and 4c. Belt ornaments from the Tomb of King Muryeong, a toad-shaped pendant, and an animal-face-shaped pendant. (Gongju National Museum).

Tombs 14, 16, and 18, but no rings were found in the Tomb of King Muryeong.

Belt Ornaments: Belt ornaments have been found only in the Songsan-ri tombs, including the Tomb of King Muryeong (Fig. 4a). The belt buckles are generally shaped like mushrooms, as exemplified by the examples from the Tomb of King Muryeong and other Songsan-ri tombs. Whereas the buckles are standardized in form, the plaques forming the actual belts come in a variety of shapes, including square, oval, and inverted heart. In addition, Baekje belt plaques also feature diverse decorative motifs, as opposed to Silla belt plaques, which are uniformly decorated with three-pointed leaf motifs. The belt ornament from the Tomb of King Muryeong features an interesting contrast between the white-silver plaques and darker gold spangles, providing a glimpse into Baekje aesthetics. The belts were further embellished with various types of dangling pendants. For example, the belt from the Tomb of King Muryeong has pendants shaped like a toad (symbolizing the moon, Fig. 4b), an animal face (Fig. 4c), and a white tiger and *jujak* (朱雀, a mythical vermilion bird), both of which appear on an elongated rectangular plate.

Songsan-ri Tomb 1 yielded two square belt plaques made of silver, each decorated with a simpli-



Fig. 4d. Two square belt plaques made of silver from Songsan-ri Tomb 1. (Gongju National Museum).

fied arabesque pattern in openwork (Fig. 4d). These artifacts are typical of Silla belt plaques and closely resemble those found in Geumgwanchong Tomb of Silla. In fact, the belt plaques from both tombs employed the same manufacturing technique, indicating that the Songsan-ri Tomb 1 plaques were Silla products that found their way into Baekje hands. How these Silla belt plaques were introduced into Baekje territory remains unknown, but it likely had to do with the alliance between Silla and Baekje,

which began around 430 and continued until 551.

Gilt-bronze Shoes: The Tomb of King Muryeong is the only Ungjin-period Baekje tomb to have yielded gilt-bronze shoes. Each shoe had three respective components: an outer openwork sheath, an inner plate, and a base. Each component was made from separate metallic sheets composed of an inner layer of silver and an outer layer of gilt-bronze. The shoes of the king (Fig. 5a) and queen (Fig. 5b) are similar in terms of general appearance and production technique, but they show different types of decoration. The surface of each shoe is divided into hexagonal sections, resembling a tortoiseshell pattern, and each section is decorated with openwork phoenix and arabesque motifs. Baekje shoes were produced with an entirely different technique than shoes found in Goguryeo and Silla tombs. Baekje production techniques closely resemble those of sixth-century shoes from the Japanese Archipelago, which reflects the close political relationship that existed between Baekje and the Japanese Wa (倭) state at that time.

2) Decorative Pendants: Decorative pendants made from both gold and silver (Fig. 6) were discovered in the Tomb of King Muryeong. These pendants show

diverse shapes, including flowers, four-leaf figures, leaves, circles, and teardrops. The precise function of these pendants is unclear, but they may have been used to embellish clothing or wooden coffins. One of the flower-shaped silver pendants bears the inscription “140” (一百卅). Flower-shaped silver pendants were also found in Songsan-ri Tomb 2, and flower-shaped gold pendants were found in Geumhak-dong Tombs 2 and 24. Leaf-shaped ornaments were discovered in Songsan-ri Tombs 5 and 8, in Geumhak-dong Tomb 2, and in the stone-chamber tomb at Ongnyong-dong San 20-1 beonji.

2. Ornamental Weapons

A limited number of ornamental weapons of the Ungjin period have been recovered from the Songsan-ri tombs. The decorated sword from the Tomb of King Muryeong (Fig. 7a) clearly ranks among the finest examples of Baekje metalwork from the Ungjin period. This ornate sword, which hung from the king's waist on his left side, features a ring-shaped pommel decorated with a dragon motif, which was delicately cast using the lost-wax technique. At both the top and bottom of the sword's grip, there are small decorative panels with phoenix and arabesque patterns inside tortoiseshell frames. Each of these designs and the

tortoiseshell frames were produced separately and then welded to make the panel. The space between the upper and lower panels is filled with alternating rows of tightly wound gold and silver wire. Aside from its obvious splendor, this sword is an extremely significant artifact, as it is the only example of a ring-pommel sword with dragon or phoenix design that can be dated with confidence. The elaboration of the designs inside the decorative panels reflects the highest degree of craftsmanship and the most advanced technical skills, making this one of the most magnificent decorative swords in all of East Asia. Ring-pommel swords were also discovered in Songsan-ri Tombs 1 (Fig. 7b) and 6, while Songsan-ri Tomb 29 (Fig. 7c) yielded a sword decorated with dragon and arabesque patterns inlaid in gold.

3. Metal Vessels and Mirrors

Various metal vessels were found in the Tomb of King Muryeong, the most exquisite of which is a covered cup and accompanying saucer made of silver, brass, and cupro-nickel (Fig. 8a). The silver cup and its cover are elaborately engraved with lotus blossoms, phoenix, mountains, and trees, while the saucer features an impressive design of a Kalavinka (迦陵頻伽, a mythical creature with a bird's body and

a human head) holding a lotus blossom. The shape of the cup and its cover harmonize well with these diverse images. Several types of copper vessels were found in the Tomb of King Muryeong, including bowls (Fig. 8b) that were formed through casting, wrought through hammering, and then finished by being spun on a potter's wheel. Bowls with similar shapes and production techniques have also been found in Jisan-dong Tomb 44 in Goryeong, Okcheon Tomb M3 in Hapcheon, and Gyeongsan-ri Tomb 2 in Uiryeong. All of these tombs are located within the former territory of Daegaya (大加耶), but the bowls likely originated in the Baekje Kingdom.

Also of great interest are three bronze mirrors from the Tomb of King Muryeong (Fig. 8c). One mirror bearing an inscription reading “Uijason” (宜子孫, Ch. *yizisun*)² and featuring a decorative band of animal figures (獸帶, Ch. *shoudai*) (Fig. 8c left) was found near the king's head. Another bronze mirror with a decorative band of animal figures was found near the head of the queen, while a third mirror featuring a square decorative panel surrounded by

² “Uijason,” a phrase meaning “hopes for the rightful prosperity of descendants,” began to appear on rare and precious objects during China's Han Dynasty.



Figs. 5a and 5b. King's shoes (left) and Queen's shoes (right) from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).

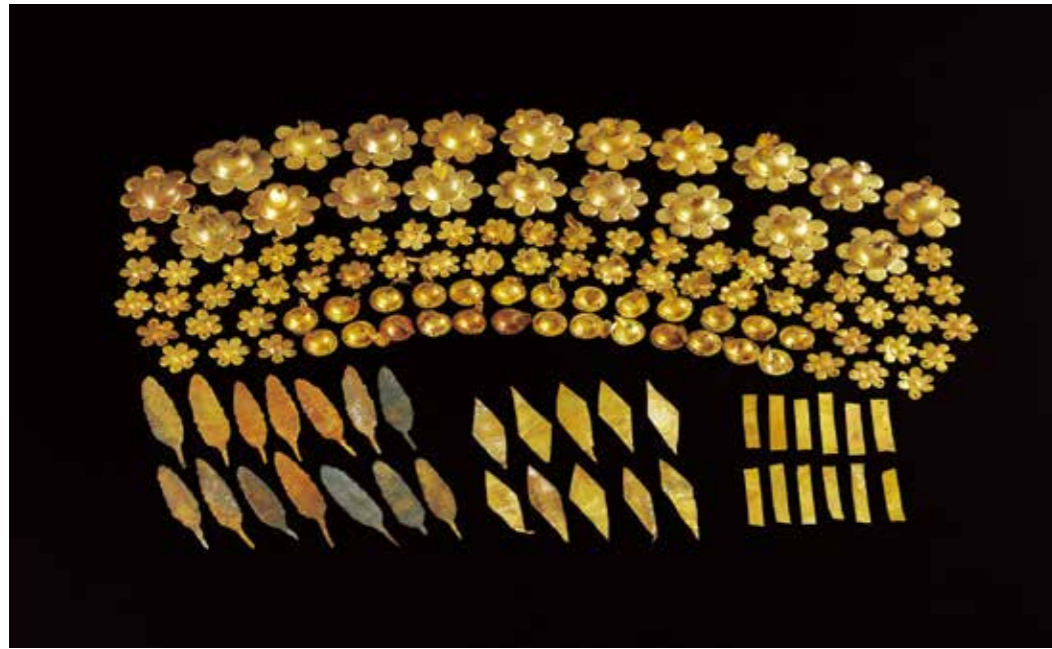


Fig. 6. Gold decorative pendants from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).



Fig. 7a. Decorated sword from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).

Fig. 7b. Ring-pommel sword from Songsan-ri Tomb 1. (Gongju National Museum).

Fig. 7c. Dragon and arabesque patterns inlaid in gold on a sword from Songsan-ri Tomb 29. (Gongju National Museum).

mythical animals (方格規矩神獸紋鏡, Fig. 8c middle) was placed near the king's footrest. These types of mirrors were modeled on the Chinese "shoudai mirrors" (獸帶鏡), which were made during the Han (漢, 206 BCE-220 CE) and Wei (魏, CE 220-265) dynas-

ties. However, the decorative figures and patterns on the mirrors from the Tomb of King Muryeong are somewhat less distinct than those typically seen on Chinese *shoudai* mirrors, suggesting that the Baekje mirrors may be imitations produced at a much later



Fig. 8a and 8b. Covered cup and accompanying saucer (8a) and copper bowl (8b) from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).



Fig. 8c. Bronze mirrors from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).

date. Even so, it is difficult to determine whether the mirrors from the Tomb of King Muryeong were made by Baekje or by Chinese craftspeople. Such bronze mirrors were symbolic objects used by the elite, rather than everyday items. As in the Bronze Age, the mirrors of Korea's Three Kingdoms period were one of several types of objects used to symbolize the priestly role held by the king and other members of the elite. Notably, a bronze mirror in Japan was cast from the same mold as the mirror with the "Uijason" inscription and bears the same inscription, providing valuable insights into interactions between the Baekje and Japanese Wa states.

As noted, the majority of the metal artifacts excavated from Ungjin-period Baekje tombs in the Gongju region have come from the Tomb of King Muryeong. These include personal objects that appear to have been used by the king and queen prior to their death, as well as objects that were produced or imported during the early years of the reign of

King Seong (聖王, r. 523-554), who succeeded to the throne after King Muryeong and thus oversaw the funeral and interment of his predecessor. Many of the artifacts appear to date to the 520s, and all of the artifacts must have been manufactured before 529, when the queen (who died in 526) was finally interred within the tomb. The personal ornaments (including the decorative sword) that would have been worn by the king and queen, along with the everyday objects (e.g., silver cup and copper saucer, other bronze vessels, bronze mirrors, bronze iron) share many similarities with the metalwork objects of other East Asian countries. As such, these artifacts attest to the vital role that Baekje played in the network of international relationships that existed at the time.

The metalwork artifacts from the Tomb of King Muryeong include both imported and locally made objects. Conversely, large numbers of metalwork artifacts that were made by the same Baekje craftspeople who produced the articles deposited in the Tomb

of King Muryeong have also been found in the territories of Silla, Daegaya, and Japanese Wa. Artifacts from all three of these states also include many local imitations of Baekje metalwork. The Tomb of King Muryeong also yielded metalwork objects, ceramic

vessels, and *wushu* coins (五銖錢) that originated in the Southern Dynasties (南朝) of China. As such, the assemblage of metalwork objects from the Tomb of King Muryeong clearly demonstrates that the people of Baekje maintained close relationships with their



Figs. 9a through 9e. Metalwork artifacts from Suchon-ri Tomb 1: gilt-bronze crown (9a), gold earrings (9b), gilt-bronze belt ornaments (9c), gilt-bronze shoes (9d), and gold-and-silver decorated sword (9e). (Chungnam Institute of History and Culture).

neighboring states (i.e., Silla, Daegaya, Wa), engaged in brisk maritime trade with China, and actively transmitted their sophisticated culture to these surrounding regions.

III. Baekje Society in the Ungjin Period as Seen through Metalwork

1. Development of Baekje Metalwork Culture

Baekje's overall system for producing metalwork seems to have been adversely affected by the transfer of the capital to Ungjin in 475. Of course, the production of objects made from precious metals depends on the availability of materials, such as gold and silver. At the time, gold was in great demand among the ruling elite of the surrounding regions, including China, and was often included in official exchanges of gifts between countries. The *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀) reports that the Japanese, who had no indigenous sources of gold, envied Silla's resources of gold. Hence, the discovery of fine metalwork artifacts produced with such precious metals attests to the presence of highly skilled craftspeople and workshops. Because of the great value of the material, artisans working with precious metals did not enjoy the relative luxury of "trial and error" that characterized the production of pottery and roof tiles. There was little margin for error, as the precious materials had to be used with the utmost efficiency, with the least possible quantities used to the greatest possible effect. Therefore, the production of fine metalwork objects required the presence of craftspeople with the most advanced technical skills. The results of archaeological excavations suggest that, given the political circumstances of the early Ungjin period, Baekje society simply did not have the aforementioned resources for producing fine metalwork at that time, and thus could not actively produce such objects.

The current understanding is that, after moving its capital to Ungjin, Baekje was not able to re-establish its metalwork production system until sometime around the sixth century. The quality and quantity of the metalwork artifacts from the Tomb of King Muryeong suggests that metalwork production had been resumed sometime prior to King Muryeong's death in 523. The metalwork artifacts of the Ungjin period can be usefully compared to those of the Hanseong period, as both continuities and discontinui-

ties can be identified between the two.

Continuity in the Baekje metalwork tradition can be studied by first examining the metalwork artifacts recovered from Suchon-ri Tomb 1 in Gongju, which represents the burial of a Hanseong-period "regional leader." Fortunately, this tomb seems to have been overlooked by grave robbers, as the personal ornaments and decorated sword of the deceased were found in situ. Characteristics of the "Baekje style" can be seen in these objects, including the gilt-bronze crown, gold earrings, gilt-bronze belt ornaments, gilt-bronze shoes, and gold-and-silver decorated sword (Figs. 9a through 9e). The emergence of a common artistic style associated with a specific political entity indicates the existence of full-time, specialist craftspeople, who were continuously employed in the manufacture of objects for the ruling elite. The distinctive characteristics of the Baekje style observed in the metalwork of Suchon-ri Tomb 1 were maintained into the Ungjin period, and can also be seen in the metalwork artifacts of the Tomb of King Muryeong.

Additional examples that demonstrate the continuity between the metalwork of the Hanseong and Ungjin periods are presented in Figure 10. For example, several characteristic features can be identified in the queen's earrings from the Tomb of King Muryeong (Fig. 2b), including the finishing of the connecting rings, the use of filigree, and the three wing-shaped dangling ornaments. These earrings differ significantly from those from the Hanseong period, but earrings recently discovered in Suchon-ri Tomb 8 (Fig. 10a) have helped to bridge the gap between the two. An animal-face belt plaque from Songsan-ri Tomb 2 (Fig. 10b) shares similarities with examples from Suchon-ri Tombs 1 and 4 (Fig. 10c), which date to the Hanseong period. Based on this similarity, the style of belt plaque from the Suchon-ri tombs may have developed over a number of stages into the style of belt plaque from Songsan-ri. Similar belt plaques have been discovered at Gaya and Wa sites, and they appear to have developed from the Baekje examples. No animal-face belt plaques were found in the Tomb of King Muryeong, nor have any been identified at Baekje sites of the Sabi period (538-660). As such, it appears that, sometime during the Ungjin period, these animal-face plaques were replaced by undecorated belt plaques in the form of inverted hearts. In the case of the gilt-bronze shoes



Fig. 10a. Earrings from Suchon-ri Tomb 8. (Author's photograph).



Fig. 10b. Animal-face belt plaque from Songsan-ri Tomb 2. (National Museum of Korea).



Fig. 10c. Animal-face belt plaque from Suchon-ri Tomb 4. (Chungnam Institute of History and Culture).

from the Tomb of King Muryeong (Fig. 5a), characteristics include the metal cleats attached to the soles and the overlapping of the sides with the front and back where they are connected. Similar details can also be seen in the shoes excavated from Suchon-ri Tomb 4 and Bongdeok-ri Tomb 1 in Gochang (Fig. 10d), both of which date to the Hanseong period. The size, shape, and structure of the gilt-bronze shoes indicate that, unlike other types of metalwork artifacts, they were not used in everyday life, and thus likely were intended solely as funerary objects. The presence of gilt-bronze shoes in the tombs of both Baekje

royalty and regional leaders of the Hanseong period indicates that the funerary practices of the former were carried over into the latter. However, no such continuity has been observed for the Ungjin period.

Figures 11a and 11b show renderings of two different versions of the “striding-dragon design” (走龍紋), which decorate the ring-shaped pommels of decorative swords from the Hanseong and Ungjin periods, respectively. The motif represented in Figure 11a appears on a sword from the Tomb of King Muryeong, while that in Figure 11b appears on the sword from Yongwon-ri Stone-lined burial 1 in Cheonan. The two designs are similar in terms of overall composition and general arrangement of the dragons, with one dragon head on either side, each facing towards the center. The design on the sword from Yongwon-ri is



Fig. 10d. Shoes from Bongdeok-ri Tomb 1 Stone chamber 4. (Seoul Baekje Museum).

more symmetrical, however, with the heads of the dragons placed in the exact center. On the sword from the Tomb of King Muryeong, the heads of the dragons extend beyond the central axis to approximately the mid-body of the opposite dragon. The two designs show both similarities and differences, and it is possible that future excavations will uncover intermediate examples that bridge the gap between the two. The dragon ring-pommel decoration of the sword from the Tomb of King Muryeong was once regarded as an exceptional piece, prior to the discovery of decorated swords from Yongwon-ri Stone-lined burial 1 and Suchon-ri Tomb 1. However, recent excavations have uncovered a similar example that predates the sword from the Tomb of King Muryeong by roughly 100 years. Significantly, this recent discovery indicates that the design likely developed indigenously from Hanseong Baekje prototypes, rather than from Chinese sources, as had originally been hypothesized.

Despite those obvious continuities, some metalwork artifacts found in Ungjin-period tombs show discontinuities with the earlier Hanseong period. For example, the leaf-shaped and flower-shaped gold ornaments shown in Figure 6 and certain sets of metal vessels from the Ungjin period have no close counterparts among Hanseong-period artifacts. These unique Ungjin artifacts primarily come from tombs in and around Gongju, with most having been recovered from the Tomb of King Muryeong. The only types of metal vessels so far recovered from Hanseong-era sites are bronze braziers and three-legged cauldrons, but the metal vessels of the Ungjin period are much more varied, with the additional inclusion of bowls, plates, cups, and cups with saucers, as well as spoons, chopsticks, and irons (for pressing clothing). Although the diversity of metal vessels can be regarded as another characteristic of the Ungjin metalwork tradition, it is difficult to know which of these objects were produced by Baekje craftspeople and which might have been imported from the Southern Dynasties of China. The advanced metalworking skills of Baekje craftspeople are evinced by a sarira reliquary from the site of Wangheungsa Temple in Buyeo (Fig. 12), which was definitely produced indigenously. Thus, it is certainly possible that most of the metal vessels from the Tomb of King Muryeong were the products of Baekje craftsmanship. One exception would seem to be the iron, which likely was imported, given that similar examples have been found at Southern Dynasty sites in

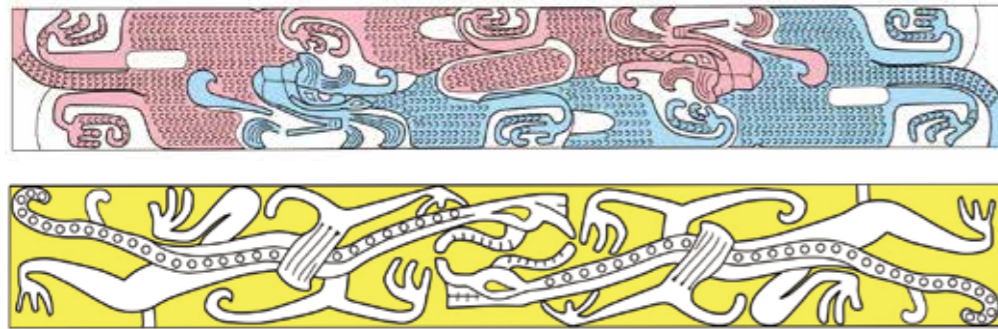
China (Figs. 13a, 13b, and 13c).

What function did the metal vessels placed within the Tomb of King Muryeong serve? Similar vessels recovered from Goguryeo tombs in Ji'an (in China's Jilin Province) have been interpreted as ritual vessels. Such artifacts include a brazier, tripod cauldron, and covered container from Chilseongsan Tomb 96, and a cauldron, tripod cauldron, steamer, and three-legged bowl from Usanha Tomb 68. A set of Goguryeo ritual vessels was also found in the main burial chamber of the south mound of Hwangnam-daechong Tomb, which is considered a royal tomb. The types of vessels included in these Goguryeo sets appear to have been based upon the sets of ritual vessels used by rulers and aristocrats in the Bronze Age dynasties of central China. However, the vessel types recovered from the Tomb of King Muryeong (e.g., a bronze iron, a silver and copper cup and saucer, copper bowls, and copper dishes) seem more likely to have been everyday items used by the royal family rather than ritual vessels. In contrast, the brazier and three-legged cauldron from Hanseong Baekje sites can be regarded as ritual vessels. Notably, the three bronze mirrors found in the Tomb of King Muryeong also have no known predecessors among Hanseong-era artifacts. However, given that the types of grave goods within the royal tombs of the Hanseong period has yet to be identified, the mirrors cannot yet be used to assess the continuity or discontinuity of Baekje metalwork traditions.

2. Monopolization of Metalwork by the Royal Family and its Socio-political Context

One topic of considerable interest is the ownership of metalwork objects in the Ungjin period. Figure 14 presents a satellite map showing the distribution of key tumuli grounds located in and around Gongju. The tumuli grounds of Suchon-ri, Chiwirisan, and Singwan-dong date back to the Hanseong period, whereas the tumuli grounds of Songsan-ri, Gyocheon-ri, Ungjin-dong, Botonggol, Ongnyong-dong, Geumhak-dong, and Ugeumchi were newly established during the Ungjin period. Some of these tumuli grounds continued to be used in the succeeding Sabi period as well.

Members of the central elite in the Gongju region during the Hanseong period were buried in the Suchon-ri tumuli ground, while subordinate groups used the tumuli grounds of Chiwirisan and Singwan-



Figs. 11a and 11b. Comparison of the "striding dragon design" decorating the ringed pommel of swords from the Tomb of King Muryeong (11a) and Yongwon-ri Stone-lined burial 1 (11b).

dong. All three of these tumuli grounds are located to the north of the Geum River. In particular, a high concentration of metalwork artifacts has been recovered at Suchon-ri. In contrast, the tumuli grounds of the Ungjin period are situated along the hills and mountain ridges to the south of the Geum River. This difference in location is a key distinguishing feature between the tumuli grounds of the two periods. Songsan-ri Tomb 6, the Tomb of King Muryeong (also located within the Songsan-ri tumuli ground), and Gyochon-ri Tombs 2 and 3 all feature burial chambers made of bricks, but the rest of the tombs generally have stone burial chambers with corridor entrances. As Figure 14 illustrates, the tombs of the Ungjin period are concentrated around the areas of Songsan-ri, Gyochon-ri, and Ungjin-dong.

The Tomb of King Muryeong yielded various personal ornaments (e.g., crown ornaments, hair ornaments, earrings, belt ornaments, necklaces, bracelets, and gilt-bronze shoes), which were found in situ in the tomb where the deceased had been laid to rest. A large proportion of the metalwork ornaments discovered in this royal tomb consists of the gold and silver decorative pendants shaped like leaves, flowers, rhombuses, and circles. The metalwork artifacts from the Tomb of King Muryeong are impressive in terms of both their quantity and the high quality of their production techniques. This tomb also yielded three bronze mirrors—the likes of which have not been found in other Baekje tombs—as well as fourteen metal vessels. Only a limited number of artifacts have been recovered from the other tombs of the Songsan-ri tumuli ground or from the tombs of the Gyochon-ri tumuli ground (another central burial ground of the Ungjin period) because most of those



Fig. 12. Sarira reliquary from the Wangheungsa Temple site and detail. (Author's photograph).

tombs had been disturbed by grave robbers prior to archaeological excavation. Nevertheless, Songsan-ri Tombs 1, 2, 5, and 29 yielded several belt ornaments that had escaped looting. Even in their incomplete state, these artifacts demonstrate that the tradition of wearing belts with metallic fittings and ornaments, which had been practiced during the preceding Hanseong and succeeding Sabi periods, was also practiced during the Ungjin period. Interestingly, however, unlike the belts of the ensuing Sabi period, the belt ornaments of the Ungjin period do not follow any single style. In the Ungjin period, the regulation of clothing according to social status had not yet been institutionalized, which may explain the relative diversity of styles among the Ungjin-period belts.

Since Korea's liberation from Japan 1945, the only tomb from the central tumuli grounds of the Ungjin period (Songsan-ri and Gyochon-ri) that has been officially excavated is the Tomb of King Muryeong. Excavations have been carried out on the surrounding tumuli grounds (Ungjin-dong, Botonggol, Ongnyong-dong, Geumhak-dong, and Ugeumchi), but none of the excavated tombs has yielded numer-

ous or diverse metalwork artifacts. A few tombs have yielded metalwork artifacts, but these items have been limited in number, usually because the tombs had previously been robbed. However, seven tombs from the Geumhak-dong tumuli ground yielded leaf- and flower-shaped pendants, as well as finger rings. This discovery suggests that more Ungjin-period tombs containing similar types of metal artifacts may yet be found in the Gongju region. Bracelets have been recovered from several tombs, including the Tomb of King Muryeong, another tomb from the Songsan-ri burial ground (the exact tomb number is unclear), Botonggol Tomb 17, and Ungjin-dong Tomb 8. In terms of their shape and the type of metal used, the bracelets from the Tomb of King Muryeong more closely resemble the example from Songsan-ri than the examples from Botonggol and Ungjin-dong.

Thus far, the majority of Ungjin-period metalwork artifacts have come from the Tomb of King Muryeong, which is obviously due to the fact that this royal tomb was not plundered by grave robbers prior to its discovery. However, even taking this fortuitous circumstance into consideration,



Fig. 13a. Iron from the Tomb of King Muryeong. (Gongju National Museum).



Fig. 13b. Iron from Hwangnamdaechong Tomb north mound. (National Museum of Korea).



Fig. 13c. Iron from Zhenjiang (鎮江), Jiangsu Province, China (Author's photograph).

the metal artifacts from other tombs of this period are extremely limited by comparison. Given that these excavated tombs most likely include tombs of other royal personages and elite members of Ungjin Baekje society, how can this dearth of metalwork artifacts be explained? Of course, grave robbery is part of the answer, as all but one of the approximately thirty excavated tombs had been disturbed prior to excavation; even so, other reasons must also be considered. First, it is possible that grave goods were used more sparingly during the Ungjin period than in the earlier Hanseong era or later Sabi period. Indeed, the burial traditions of the Sabi period—characterized by stone chamber tombs with corridor entrances that were rather sparsely furnished with grave goods—may have been established during the Ungjin period. The Tomb of King Muryeong may be understood as an exception to that general trend. Second, the overall lack of tombs with metalwork artifacts may also be related to the sudden transference of the capital to Ungjin and the ensuing political instability. Some combination of these two factors almost certainly contributed to the decreasing numbers of metalwork objects placed in tombs of the Ungjin period, as compared to the preceding Hanseong period.

Despite the general diminishment of metalwork objects used as grave goods, the funerary rituals for the king and queen would still have been carried out according to the highest standards of the time, which likely would account for the abundance of metalwork

artifacts recovered from the Tomb of King Muryeong. The burial ground may have been selected and the tomb constructed while the king was still living; in addition, the various objects used in the funerary ceremonies may also have been prepared in advance. According to the epitaph plaques found in the Tomb of King Muryeong, the king and queen were not immediately interred upon their death, but lay in state for a period of twenty-seven months. During that time, the tomb would have been completed, mourners received, and succession to the throne finalized. Although many of the grave goods from the tomb were personal ornaments used while the deceased was still living, some would have been produced exclusively for funerary purposes, as was the case with Silla burials.

The Tomb of King Muryeong was built of bricks, its structure based on Chinese tombs of the Liang Kingdom (梁朝) of the Southern Dynasties. Studies of the tomb's structural elements have identified it as a large-scale tomb of the type reserved for princes or feudal lords (諸侯) of the Southern Dynasties. Chinese craftsmanship is reflected in both the firing of the bricks and in the overall construction of the tomb. The use of a foreign style of tomb and the undertaking of such opulent funerary rituals during the early sixth century may be understood in relation to the need to reinforce or re-establish the eroded power of the king. The royal authority had been weakened in the wake of the military defeat by Goguryeo and the transfer of the capital to Ungjin. As a means of protecting itself from the aristocratic elite, who were becoming more powerful, the royal family may have exercised its authority by monopolizing the use of metalwork objects.

IV. Conclusion

The metalwork artifacts recovered from the Tomb of King Muryeong are of an exceptionally high standard. The characteristic features of Baekje craftsmanship are most evident in the various personal ornaments discovered in the tomb, including crown ornaments, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, belt ornaments, and gilt-bronze shoes. The decorated sword, bronze mirrors, and metal vessels also exemplify Baekje culture from the time of King Muryeong's reign. All of these artifacts were produced prior to 529, when the queen was interred in the tomb, and

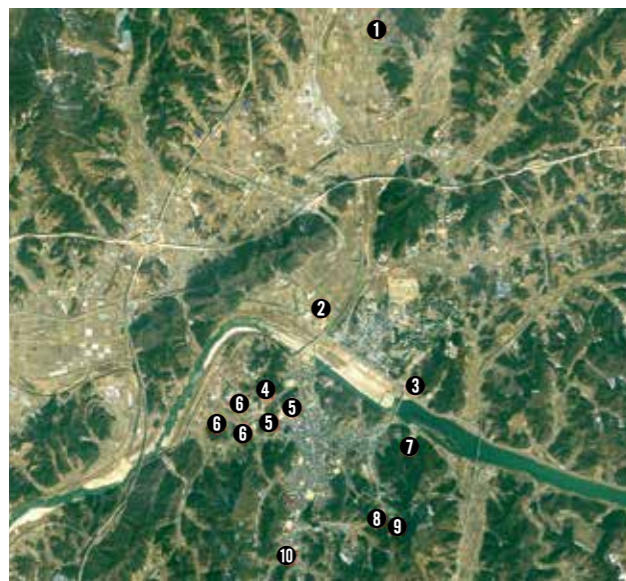


Fig. 14 - Distribution of the main tumuli grounds in the Gongju region.
 ① Suchon-ri; ② Chwirisan; ③ Singwan-dong; ④ Songsan-ri; ⑤ Gyochoon-ri;
 ⑥ Ungjin-dong; ⑦ Botonggol; ⑧ Geumhak-dong; ⑨ Ongnyong-dong; ⑩ Ugeumchi.

many of them were likely made during the 520s. The sword and personal ornaments worn by the king and queen, along with such everyday objects as the silver cup with copper saucer, bronze vessels, bronze mirrors, and bronze iron, share many similarities with metal objects from neighboring states. As such, these artifacts offer important insights about the network of foreign interaction that existed at the time, with the Baekje Kingdom at its center.

The Baekje system of metalwork production appears to have suffered a significant setback with the transfer of the capital to Ungjin in 475. Evidence suggests that the system did not fully recover until sometime around the beginning of the sixth century. A comparison of the metalwork traditions of the Hanseong and Ungjin periods reveals both continuities and discontinuities. Continuity is most clearly represented by shared stylistic characteristics among the metalwork objects of Suchon-ri Tomb 1 (Hanseong period) and those from the Tomb of King Muryeong (Ungjin period). At the same time, discontinuity is evident in the sudden reduction in the quantity of metalwork artifacts following the move to Ungjin, as well as in the appearance of decorative objects and sets of metal vessels, such as those found in the Tomb of King Muryeong.

The Tomb of King Muryeong is one of the few tombs of the Ungjin period that was never discovered by grave robbers, which at least partially accounts for the abundance of metalwork artifacts discovered therein. However, even taking rampant grave robbery into account, the overall quantity of metalwork artifacts in other tombs of the Ungjin period seems quite limited. The reduced inclusion of metal grave goods may be related to an overall decrease in the use of grave goods during the period, or might be associated with the political instability that followed the transfer of the capital to Ungjin. Finally, it is known that King Muryeong focused on strengthening royal power throughout his reign, and that one of King Seong's main concerns was to protect the royal family and kingly authority from the aristocratic elite who were becoming more powerful. Given this political situation, it is possible that members of the aristocracy or the regional elite were prohibited from using metalwork objects, which may have been reserved exclusively for the royal family. ㄸ

TRANSLATED BY KO ILHONG

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